



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

HD WIDENER



HW JTH3 V

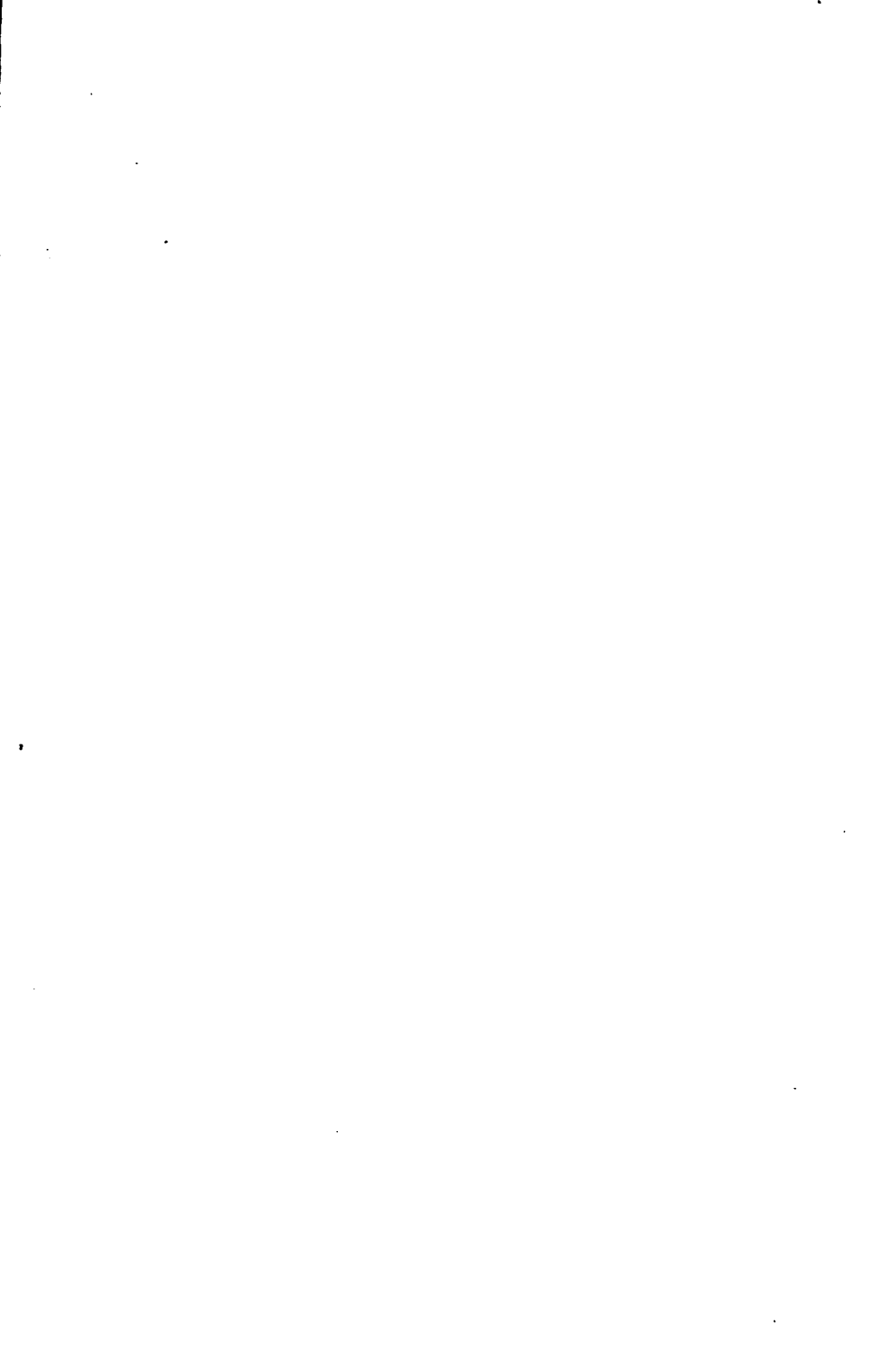


AL1575.2.64

**Harvard College
Library**

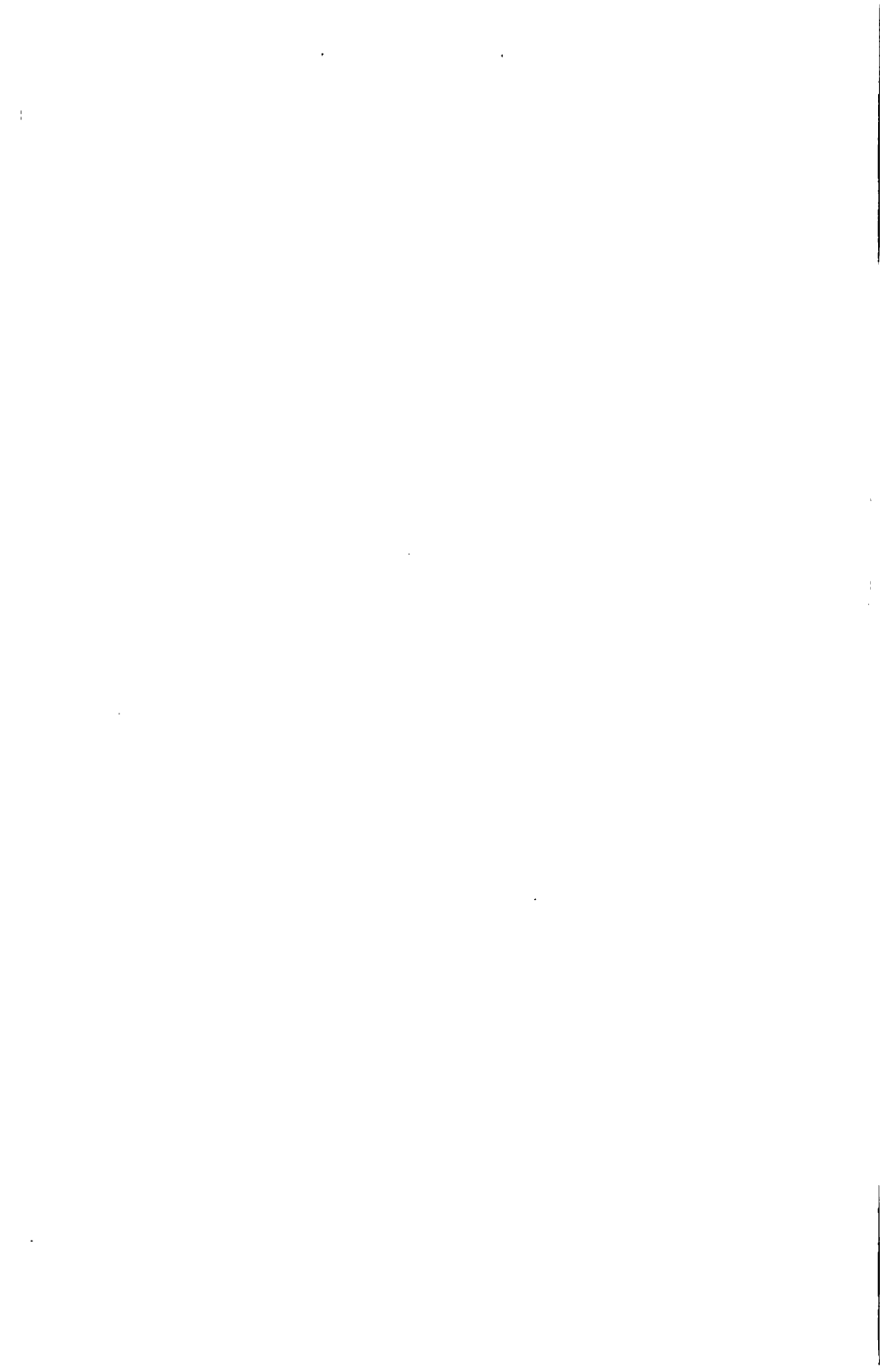


Gratis



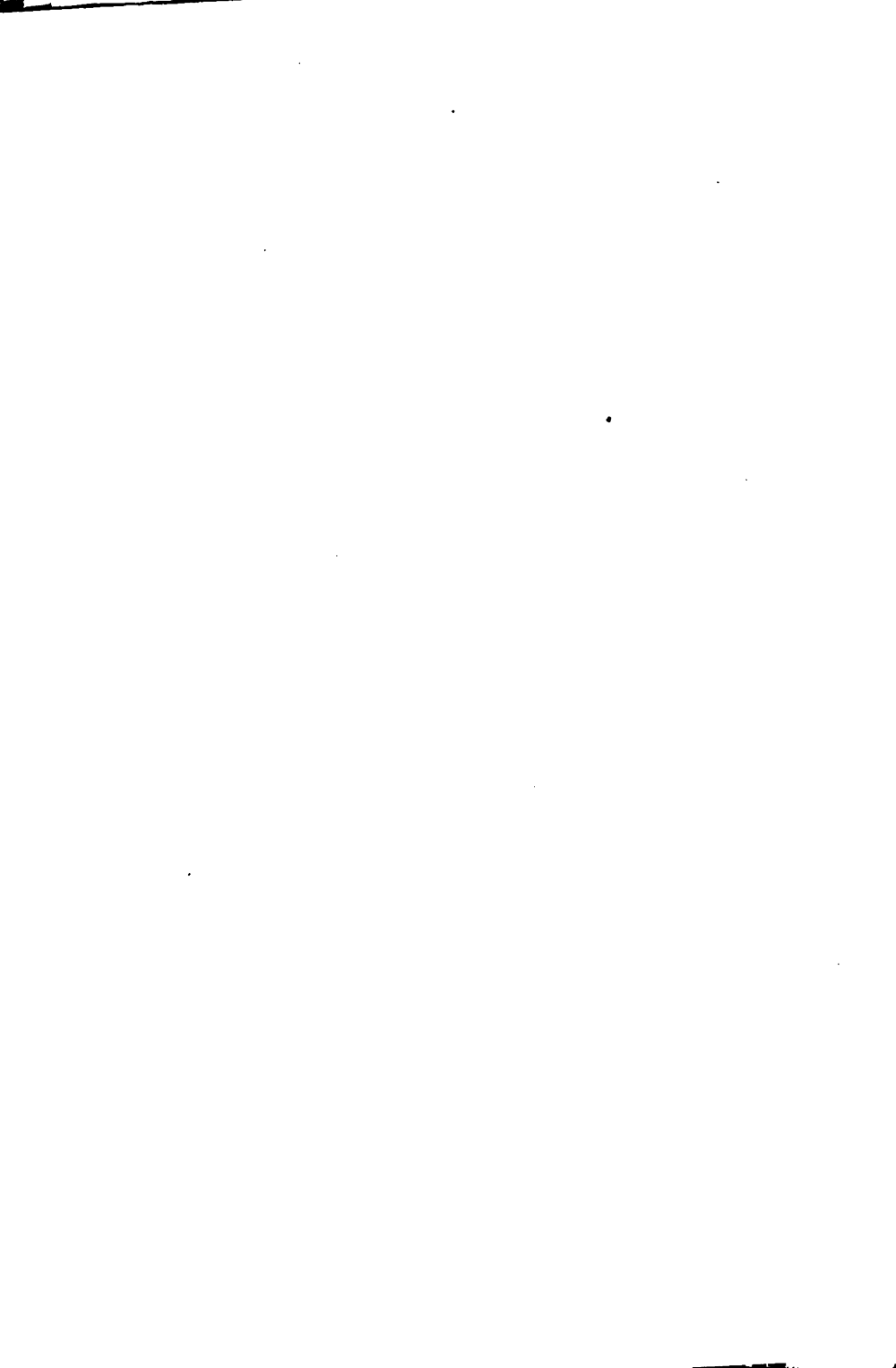








"He stepped to one side, bringing into view a woman seated upon the head of a barrel in a cart."



*Fanice
Meredith*

VOLUME II.





A decorative border of small, repeating floral motifs surrounds the text.

Fanice Meredith

A STORY of *the*
AMERICAN REVOLUTION

By
Paul Leicester Ford

Author of
THE HONOURABLE PETER STIRLING

With a *Miniature* by SHARPLESS and *Illus-*
trations by HOWARD PYLE and his pupils.

VOL II

New York
Dodd, Mead & Company

Mdcccxcix

AL1575.2.64

✓

Dec 1941

Gratis

Copyright, 1899

BY PAUL LEICESTER FORD

All rights reserved

Press of J. J. Little & Co.
New York, U. S. A.



C O N T E N T S

VOLUME II

CHAPTER	PAGE
XXXVI. Betwixt Millstones	265
XXXVII. Blues and Reds	272
XXXVIII. Black and White	282
XXXIX. Short Commons	293
XL. The Battle for Food and Forage	304
XLI. Winter Quarters	313
XLII. Barter and Sale	326
XLIII. A Choice of Evils	334
XLIV. A Cartel of Exchange	341
XLV. In the Jaws of the Lion	349
XLVI. The Farewell to Howe	358
XLVII. The Evacuation	367
XLVIII. A Time of Terror	375
XLIX. Plato <i>vs.</i> Cupid	384
L. Roses and Honeysuckle	394
LI. A Farewell and a Welcome	402
LII. Scant Welcome for Man and Beast	411
LIII. Under Shadow of the Gallows	419
LIV. A Gain and a Loss	426
LV. Prisoners of War	433
LVI. A Life of Captivity	441
LVII. A Paper Money and Militia War	449
LVIII. From Blue Ridge to Tide Water	455

CHAPTER	PAGE
LIX. Traitors in the Rear	465
LX. The Spinning of the Web	473
LXI. In the Toils	483
LXII. Within the Lines	495
LXIII. On Brunswick Green	507
LXIV. A Settling of Old Scores	519
LXV. Peace in Sight	526





ILLUSTRATIONS

VOLUME II

PAGE

George Washington (in color),	<i>Frontispiece.</i>
"The swinging body threw a shifting shadow across the snow."	6
"Over the fire was suspended the tell-tale pot."	20
"She collapsed on the bench and began to sob."	22
"Janice helped the long hours pass by knitting on a silk purse."	30
Major John André.	34
"Nothing would do André but he must teach Janice to paint.	42
Margaret ("Peggy") Chew.	54
Bill of Play given by British officers.	58
Headquarters at Valley Forge.	60
"Janice enjoyed the novel and delightful world into which she had been plunged."	62
"Revealing the figure of Jack stretched on the floor."	88
On the way to General Howe's.	90
Sir William Howe.	92
"He stepped to one side, bringing into view a woman seated upon the head of a barrel in a cart."	118
"Then he turned to the daughter and shook her hand."	128
"Major General Charles Lee."	152
"Your Excellency, I wish speech with you on a matter of life and death."	160
"The roads were so heavy that sometimes they only made six or seven miles in a day."	170
Madame de Riedesel.	174
Virginia State Money.	186
"Two of the party caught him by the leg and brought him violently to the ground."	188
Col. Tarleton.	192

	PAGE
"Nine thousand pounds!" instantly offered Bagby."	204
"Who's that?" he demanded, halting his horse."	206
"The three stood silent as the two ships swept on-ward."	214
"The newcomer proved to be Major Hennion, clothed in an old suit of butternut coloured linen."	216
"They scrambled up the parapet and went surging over the crest, pell mell, upon the British."	228
"Across his eyes was tied a broad white band."	238
Charles, Earl Cornwallis.	240
The Continental Tavern, Brunswick.	244
Greenwood, the home of the Merediths.	262



JANICE MEREDITH

A TALE OF THE REVOLUTION

VOLUME II

BETWIXT MILLSTONES

THE reunion of the Merediths was so joyful a one that little thought was taken of the course of public events. Nor were they now in a position easily to learn of them. Philemon and his troop had hastened to rejoin at the first news of the British reverses, the remaining farm servants had one by one taken advantage of the anarchy of the last eight months secretly to desert, or boldly enlist, the squire's gout prevented his going abroad, and the quiet was too great a boon to both Mrs. Meredith and Janice to make them wish for anything but its continuance.

If there was peace at Greenwood, it was more than could be said for the rest of the land. The Continental success at Princeton, small though it was in degree, worked as a leaven, and excited a ferment throughout the State. Every Whig whom the British successes had for a moment made faint-hearted, every farmer whose crops or stock had been seized, every householder on whom troops had been quartered, even Joe Bagby and the Invincibles took guns from their hiding-places and, forming themselves into parties, joined Washington's army in the Jersey hills about Morristown, or, acting on their own account, boldly engaged the British detachments and stragglers wherever they were encountered. Withdrawn as the Merediths might be, the principal achievements were too important not to finally reach them, and by infinite filtration they heard of how the Waldeckers had been attacked at

Springfield and put to flight, how the British had abandoned Hackensack and Newark without waiting for the assaults, and how at Elizabethtown they had been surprised and captured. Less than a month from the time that the royal army had practically held the Jerseys, it was reduced to the mere possession of Brunswick, Amboy, and Paulus Hook, and every picket or foraging party sent out from these points was almost certain of a skirmish.

It was this state of semi-blockade which gave the Merediths their next taste of war's alarms. Late in February a company of foot and a half troop of horse, with a few waggons, made their appearance on the river road, and halted opposite the gate of Greenwood. Painful as was the squire's foot, this sight was sufficient to make him bear the agony of putting it to the ground, and bring him limping to the door.

"How now! For what are ye come?" he shouted at a detachment which was already filing through the gate.

At the call, two officers who had been seemingly engaged in a discussion, rode toward the porch, and the moment they were within speaking distance one of them began an explanation.

"I was just a-tellin' Captain Plunkett that we'd done a mighty bad stroke this mornin', but that this 'ud be a worse one, for —"

"Why, it's Phil!" cheerfully exclaimed Mr. Meredith. "Welcome, lad, and all the more that I feared 't was another call the thieving Whigs were about to pay my cribs and barn. Where have ye been, lad? But, rather, in with ye and your friend," he said, interrupting his own question, as the other officer approached, "and tell your errand over a bottle where there's more warmth."

"It's such a mighty sorry errand, squire," replied Philemon, with evident reluctance, and reddening, "that it won't take many words ter tell. We was sent out yestere'en toward Somerset Court-house, a-foragin', and this mornin' as we was returnin', we was set upon by the rebels."

"Devil burn it!" muttered the captain, "what do you call such mode of warfare? At Millstone Ford, where they attacked us, they scattered like sheep as we deployed for a

charge. But the moment we were on the march in column, ping, ping, ping from every bit of cover, front, flank, and rear, and each bullet with a billet at that, no matter what the distance. Not till we reached Middle Brook did their stinging fire cease."

"And 'stead of bringin' into Brunswick forty carts of food and forage, and a swipe of cattle," groaned Philemon, "we has only four waggon-loads of wounded ter show for our raid."

"With the post nigh to short commons," went on Plunkett. "Therefore, Mr. Meredith, we are put to the necessity of taking a look at your barn and granaries."

"What!" roared the squire, incredulously, yet with a wrath in his voice that went far to show that conviction rather than disbelief was his true state of mind. "'Tis impossible that British regulars will thieve like the rebels."

Both the officers flushed, and Philemon began a faltering explanation and self-exculpation, but he was cut short by his superior saying sharply: "Tush, sir, such language will not make us deal the more gently with your cribs; so if you'd save something, mend your speech."

"I done my best, squire," groaned Philemon, "ter dissuade Captain Plunkett, but General Grant's orders was not ter come back without a train."

"Then at least ye'll have the grace to pay for what ye take? Ye'll be no worse than the rebel, that I'll lay to."

"Ay, and so we should, could we pay in the same worthless brown paper. In truth, sir, 'twas General Howe's and the commissary's orders that nothing that we seize was to be paid for, so if thou hast a quarrel 't is with those whom Mr. Hennion says are thy good friends. Here 's a chance, therefore, to exhibit the loyalty which the lieutenant has been ding-ing into my ears for the last half-mile."

"Belza burn the lot of ye!" was the squire's prompt expression of his loyalty.

Neither protests nor curses served, however, to turn the marauders from their purpose. Once again the outbuildings and store-rooms of Greenwood were ransacked and swept clear of their goodly plenty, and once again, as if to deepen

the sense of injury, the stable was made to furnish the means with which the robbery was to be completed.

While the troops were still scattered and occupied in piling the loot upon the sleighs and sledges, a volley of something more potent than the squire's oaths and objurcations interrupted them. From behind the garden hedgerow of box came a discharge of guns, and a dozen of the foraging party, including both the captain and the lieutenant of foot, fell. A moment of wild confusion followed, some of the British rushing to where the troopers' steeds were standing, and, throwing themselves into the saddles, found safety in flight, while the rest sought shelter in the big barn. Here Lieutenant Hen-nion succeeded in rallying them into some order, but it was to find that numbers of the infantry had left their muskets, and that many of the light horse were without their sabres, both having been laid aside to expedite the work.

Not daring offensive operations with such a force, the young officer, aided by the one subaltern, made the best disposition possible for defence, trusting to hold the building until the fugitives should return with aid from Brunswick. Those who had their muskets were stationed at the few windows, while the dragoons with drawn swords were grouped about the door, ready to resist an attack.

The Jersey militia had too often experienced the effectiveness of British bayonets and sabres to care to face them, and so they continued behind the hedge, and coolly reloaded their guns. Yet they, as well as their opponents, understood that time was fighting against them, and as soon as it became obvious that those in the barn intended no sortie they assumed the initiative.

The first warning of this to the besieged was another volley, which sent bullets through the windows and the crack in the door, without doing the slightest injury. At the same moment four men trailing their rifles appeared from behind the hedge, and, scattering and dodging as they ran, made for the cow yard. Two of the infantry who guarded the window that overlooked this movement, thrust out their muskets and fired; but neither of their shots told, for the moment they appeared five flashes came from the hedge, and one of the defenders, as his

hand pressed the trigger, was struck in the forehead by a rifle ball, and, staggering sidewise, he clutched his comrade's gun, so that it sent its bullet skyward. Before new men could take their places, the four runners had leaped the low fence and dashed across the yard to the shelter under the barn.

Knowing that they must be dislodged, the lieutenant commanded that the manure trap should be raised and a number of the dragoons drop down it; but no sooner had one started to swing himself through the opening than a gun cracked below, and the man, relaxing his hold, fell lifeless on his face. Another, not pausing to drop, jumped. He landed in a heap, but was on his feet in a flash, only to fall backward with a bullet through his lung. The rest hung back, unwilling to face such certain death, though their officers struck them with the flat of their swords.

Another moment developed the object of the attack, for through the trap-door suddenly shone a red light, and with it came the sound of crackling faggots. A cry of terror broke from the British, and there was a wild rush for the door, which many hands joined in throwing open. As it rolled back a dozen guns spoke, and the seven exposed men fell in a confused heap at the opening,—a lesson sharp enough to turn the rest to right about.

All pretence of discipline disappeared at once, the men ceasing to pay the slightest heed to their officers; and one, panic-stricken with fear, threw off his coat and, fairly tearing his shirt from his back, tied it to his bayonet and waved it through the door. Hennion, with an oath, sprang forwards, caught the gun and wrenched it out of the fellow's hands, at the same moment stretching him flat with a blow in the neck; but as he did so one of the troopers behind him cut the officer down with his sabre. The subaltern of foot who rushed to help his superior was caught and held by two of the men, and the officers thus disposed of, the white flag was once more held through the doorway.

At the very instant that this was accomplished, the fire below found some crevice in the flooring under the hay, and in a trice the mow burst into spitting and crackling flame. With the holder of the white flag at their head, the men

dashed through the doorway, those with arms tossing them away, and most of them throwing themselves flat upon the ground, with the double purpose of signalling their surrender and of escaping the bullets that might greet their exit.

In a moment they were the centre of a hundred men, who, but for their guns, might have been taken for a lot of farmers and field hands. One alone wore a military hat with a cockade, and it was he who demanded in a voice of self-importance : —

“Have you surrendered, and where is your commanding officer?”

“Yes,” shouted a dozen of the British, while the three men still holding the subaltern dragged him forward, without releasing their hold on his arms.

“Give up your sword, then,” demanded the wearer of the cockade.

“I’ll die first!” protested the young fellow, — a lad of not over seventeen at most, — still struggling with his soldiers. “You’ll not see an officer coerced by his own men, sir,” he sobbed, as another of the soldiers caught him by the wrist and twisted his sword from his hand.

“A mighty good lesson it is for your stinking British pride,” was the retort of the militia officer, as he accepted the sword. “I guess you’re the kind of man we’ve been looking for to make an example of. We’ll teach you what murdering our generals and plundering our houses come to — eh, men?”

“Hooray fer Joe Bagby!” shouted one of the conquerors.

“Some of you tie the prisoners, except him, two and two, and start them down the road at double quick,” ordered Captain Bagby. “Collect all the guns and sabres and throw them on the sledges. Look alive there, for we’ve no time to lose. Well, squire, what do you want?” he demanded, as he turned and found the latter’s hand on his sleeve.

“I’ve to thank ye for arriving in the nick o’ time to save me from being plundered,” said Mr. Meredith, speaking as if he were taking a dose of medicine. “Now can’t ye set to and save my outbuildings from taking fire?”

“Harkee, squire,” replied Joe, dropping his voice to a con-



“The swinging body threw a shifting shadow across the snow.”



fidential pitch, while at the same time leading his interlocutor aside out of hearing. "The sledges and what they hold is our prize, captivated from the British in a fair fight, yet we 'll get around that if you 'll say the right word."

"And what's that?" queried the squire.

"You know as well as I what 't is. The sledges are yours, and we 'll do our prettiest to prevent the stables and cribs from catching, if you 'll but say what I want said as to Miss Janice."

"I 'd see her in her grave first."

"Some of you fellows start those sleighs and sledges up the road!" shouted Bagby. "Now then, have you got that officer ready?"

"He ain't ready, but we is, cap," answered one of the little group about the prisoner.

"Up with him, then!" ordered Bagby. "See-saw 's the word: down goes Mercer, up goes a bloody-back."

At the command, half a dozen men pulled on a rope which had been passed over the bough of a tree, and the young subaltern was swung clear of the ground. He struggled so fiercely for a moment that the cords which bound his wrists parted and he was able to clutch the rope above his head in a desperate attempt to save himself. It was useless, for instantly two rifles were levelled and two bullets sent through him; his hands relaxing, he hung limply, save for a slight muscular quiver.

"If your friends, the British, come back, you can tell them that's only the beginning," Bagby told the squire. "And look out for yourself, or it's what will come to you. Now then, fellows, fall in," he called. "The line of retreat is to Somerset Court-house, and you are to guard the prisoners and the provisions if you can, but scatter if attacked in force. March!"

The motley company, without pretence of order, set off on their long, weary night tramp through the snow. Behind them the flame of the barn, now towering sixty feet in the air, made the whole scene bright with colour, save where the swinging body of the lad threw a shifting shadow across a stretch of untrampled snow.



XXXVII

BLUES AND REDS

AS the squire still stood gloomily staring, now at the departing Whigs, now at the blazing barn, and now at his stable and other buildings, Clarion, who had taken a great interest in the last hour's doings, suddenly pricked up his ears and then ran forward to a snow-drift within a few yards of the burning building. Here he halted and gave vent to a series of loud yelps. Limping forward, the squire heard his name called in a faint voice, and the next instant discovered Philemon hidden in the snow.

"I'm bad hurt, squire," he groaned; "but I made out to crawl from the barn."

"Gadsbodikins!" exclaimed Mr. Meredith. "Why, Phil, I e'en forgot ye for the moment. Here's a pass, indeed. And none but women and a one-legged man to help ye, now ye're found."

It took the whole household to carry Philemon indoors, and as it was impossible, in the squire's legless and horseless condition, to send for aid, Mrs. Meredith became the surgeon. The wound proved to be a shoulder cut, serious only from the loss of blood it had entailed, and after it was washed and bandaged the patient was put to bed. Daylight had come by the time this had been accomplished, and the squire was a little cheered to find that the snow on the roofs of his farm buildings had prevented the sparks of the barn from igniting them.

Twenty-four hours elapsed before help came to the household, and then it was in the form of Harcourt's dragoons. From Tarleton it was learned that the fugitives, on their arrival at Brunswick, asserted that Washington's whole army had attacked them, and was in full advance upon the post,—

news which had kept the whole force under arms for hours, and prevented any attempt to come to the assistance of the detachment. When the major learned that eighty picked troops had been killed or captured by a hundred raw militia, his language was more picturesque than quotable. There was nothing to be done, however; and after they had vowed retaliation for the subaltern, buried the dead, and the surgeon had looked at Phil's wound and approved of Mrs. Meredith's treatment, the squadron rode back to Brunswick.

This and other like experiences served to teach the English that it was not safe to send out foraging parties, and for a time active warfare practically ceased. The Continental forces, reduced at times to less than a thousand men, were not strong enough to attack the enemy's posts, and the British, however much they might grumble over a fare of salt food, preferred it to fresher victuals when too highly seasoned with rifle bullets.

The Merediths were somewhat better provided, Sukey's store-rooms proving to have many an unransacked cupboard, while the farmers in the vicinity, however bare they had apparently been stripped, were able, when money was offered, to supply poultry, eggs, milk, and many other comforts, which through lack of stock and labour Greenwood could no longer furnish.

His wound was therefore far from an ill to the lieutenant of horse, since it not merely relieved him from the stigma of the surrender, but saved him from the privation of the poor food and cramped quarters his fellow troopers were enduring at Brunswick. Nor did he count as the least advantage the tendance that Janice, half by volition and half by compulsion, gave him. When at last he was able to come downstairs, the days were none too long as he sat and watched her nimble fingers sew, or embroider, or work at some other of her tasks.

One drawback there was to this joy. In spite of strict orders against straggling, many a red-coated officer risked punishment for disobedience, and capture by the enemy, by sneaking through the pickets and spending long hours at Greenwood. Though Phil's service had given him much more tongue and assurance than of yore, he was still unable to cope with them; and, conscious that he cut but a poor figure to the

girl when they were present, he was at times jealous and quarrelsome.

Twice he laid his anxieties and desires before the squire and begged for an immediate wedding, but that worthy was by no means as ready as once he had been; for while convinced of the eventual success of the British, he foresaw unsettled times in the immediate future, and knew that the marriage of his girl to an officer of the English army was a serious if not decisive step. Yet delay was all he wished, being too honest a man to even think of breaking faith with the young fellow; and finally one evening, when he had become genial over a due, or rather undue, amount of Madeira and punch, he was won over by Philemon's earnest persuasions, and declared that the wedding should take place before the British broke up their winter quarters and marched to Philadelphia.

The next morning the squire had no remembrance of his evening's pledge, but he did not seek to cry off from it when reminded by Philemon. Mrs. Meredith was called into conclave, and then Janice was summoned and told of the edict.

"And now, lass, thou hast got thyself and us into more than one scrape," ended the father, "so come and give thy dad a kiss to show that thou'rt cured of thy wrong-headedness and will do as thy mother and I wish."

Without a word Janice went to her father and kissed him; then she flung her arms about his neck, buried her head in his shoulder, and burst into tears.

The squire had been quite prepared for the conduct of two years previous and had steeled himself to enforce obedience, but this contrary behaviour took him very much aback.

"Why, Jan," he expostulated, "this is no way to carry on when a likely young officer bespeaks ye in marriage. Many's the maid would give her left hand to —"

"But I don't love him," sobbed the girl.

"And who asked if thou didst, miss?" inquired her mother, who by dint of nursing Phil had become his strong partisan. "Dost mean to put thy silly whims above thy parents' judgments?"

"But you would n't do as your father wished, and married dadda," moaned Janice.

"A giddy, perverse child I was," retorted Mrs. Meredith; "and another art thou, to fling the misbehaviour in thy mother's face."

"Nay, nay, Patty—" began the squire; but whether he was stepping forward in defence of his wife or his daughter he was not permitted to say, for Mrs. Meredith continued:—

"We'll set the wedding for next Thursday, if that suits thee, Philemon?"

"You can't name a day too soon for me, marm," assented Philemon, eagerly; "and as I just hearn the sound of hoofs outside, 't is likely some officers has arrived, and I'll speak ter them so's ter get word ter the chaplain, and ter my regiment. You need n't be afraid, Miss Janice, that 't won't be done in high style. Like as not, General Grant will put the whole post under arms." In truth, the lover was not at his ease, and was glad enough for an excuse which took him from the room. Nor was he less eager to announce his success to his comrades, hoping it would put an end to their attentions to his bride.

"Then ye'll do as I bid ye, Jan?" questioned her father.

"Yes, dad-da," Janice assented dutifully, while striving to stifle her sobs. "I—I've been a—a—wicked creature, I know, and now I'll do as you and mommy tell me."

If Philemon had been made uneasy by the girl's tears, her manner during the balance of the day did not tend to make him happier. Her sudden gravity and silence were so marked that his fellow-officers who had come to supper, and who did not know the true situation, rallied them both on Miss Meredith's loss of spirits.

"I' faith," declared Sir Frederick Mobray, moved perhaps by twinges of the little green monster, "but for the lieutenant's word I'd take oath 't was a funeral we were to attend, and issue orders for the casing of colours and muffling of drums. In the name of good humour, Mr. Meredith, have in the spirits, and I'll brew a punch that shall liquidate the gloom."

After one glass of the steaming drink, the ladies, as was the custom, rose to leave the room. At the door Janice was intercepted by Peg, with word that Sukey wished to advise with her anent some matter, so the maid did not follow her mother, but turned and entered the kitchen.

The cook was not in view ; but as the girl realised the fact, a cloaked man suddenly stepped from behind the chimney breast, and before the scream that rose to Janice's lips could escape, a firm hand was laid on them. Yet, even in the moment of surprise, the girl was conscious that, press as the fingers might, there was still an element of caress in their touch.

"I seem doomed to fright you, Miss Meredith," said Brereton, "but, indeed, 't is not intentional. Twice in the last week I've tried to gain speech of you without success, and so to-night have taken desperate means." He took his hand from her mouth. "This time I know myself safe in your hands. Ah, Miss Janice, wilt not forgive me the suspicion? for not one easy hour have I had since I knew how I had wronged you. I was sent to eastward with despatches to the New England governors, or nothing would have kept me from earlier seeking you to crave a pardon."

"Yet thou wouldst not believe me, sir, when I sent thee word."

"Sent me word, when?"

"By Lord Clowes."

"Clowes?"

"Yes. The morning after you were captivated."

"Not one word did he speak to me from the moment I was trapped until — until you, like a good angel, as now I know, came to my rescue." He bowed his head and pressed his lips upon the palm of her hand.

The girl was beginning an explanation when a loud laugh from the dining-room recalled to her the danger. "You must not stay," she protested, as she caught away her hand, which the aide had continued holding. "There are five —"

"I know it," interrupted Jack ; "and if you'd not come to me, I'd have burst in on them rather than have my third ride futile."

"Oh, go ; please go !" begged the girl, his reckless manner adding yet more to her alarm.

"Say that you forgive me," pleaded the officer, catching her hands.

"Yes, yes, anything ; only go !" besought Janice, as a second laugh from the dining-room warned her anew of the peril.

Jack stooped and kissed each hand in turn, but even as he did so one of the officers in the next room bawled : —

"Here's a toast to Lieutenant Hennion and his bride, — hip, hip, hip, bumpers ! "

Janice felt herself caught by both shoulders, with all the tenderness gone from the touch.

"What does that mean?" the aide demanded, his face very close to her own.

The girl, with bowed head, partly in shame, and partly to escape the blazing eyes which fairly burned her own, replied : "I am to marry Mr. Hennion next Thursday."

"Willingly?" burst from her questioner, as if the word were shot from a bomb.

"No."

"Then you'll do nothing of the kind," denied Brereton, with a sudden gaiety of voice. "My horse is hid in the woods by the river ; but say the word, and you shall be under Lady Washington's protection at Morristown before daylight."

"And what then?" questioned the girl.

"Then? Why, a marriage with me the moment you'll give me ay."

"But I care no more for you than I do for Mr. Hennion ; and even — "

"But I'll make you care for me," interrupted Jack, ardently.

"And even if I did," concluded Janice, "you yourself helped to teach me what the world thinks of elopements."

"Ah, don't let — don't deny — "

"No, once for all ; and release me, sir, I beg."

"Not till you swear to me that this accursed wedding is not to take place till Thursday."

"Of course not."

"And where is it to be?"

"At the church in Brunswick."

"And is the looby with his regiment or staying here?"

"Here."

Brereton laughed gaily, and more loudly than was prudent. "A bet and a marvel," he bantered : "a barley-corn to Miss Janice Meredith, that the sweetest, most bewitching creature in the world lacks a groom on her wedding day ! I must not

tarry, for 't is thirty miles to Morristown, and three days is none too much time for what I would do. Farewell," Jack ended, once more catching her hands and kissing them. He hurriedly crossed the room, but as he laid hold of the latch he as suddenly turned and strode back to the maid. "Has he ever kissed you?" he demanded, with a savage scowl on his face.

"Never!" impulsively cried the girl, while the colour flooded into her cheeks.

"Bless him for a cold-blooded icicle!" joyfully exclaimed the officer; and before Janice could realise his intention she was caught in his arms and fervently kissed. The next moment a door slammed, and he was gone, leaving the girl leaning for very want of breath against the chimney side, with redder cheeks than ever.

The colour still lingered the next morning to such an extent that it was commented upon by both her parents, who found in it proof that she was now reconciled to their wishes. Had they been closer observers, they would have noticed that several times in the course of the day it waxed or waned without apparent reason, that their daughter was singularly restless, and that any sound out of doors caused her to start and listen. Not even the getting out and trying on of her wedding gown seemed to interest her. Yet nothing occurred to break the usual monotony of the life.

Her state of nervous expectancy on the second day was shown when the inevitable contingent of English officers arrived a little before dinner; for as they appeared without previous warning in the parlour door, Janice gave a scream, which startled Philemon, who was relying upon but two legs of his chair, into a pitch over backward, and brought the squire's gouty foot to the floor with a bump and a wail of pain.

"Body o' me!" ejaculated one of the new-comers. "Dost take us for Satan himself, that ye greet us so?"

"Tush, man!" corrected Mobray. "Miss Meredith could not see under our cloaks, and so, no doubt, thought us rebels. Who wouldn't scream at the prospect of an attack of the Continental blue devils—eh, Miss Janice?"

"Better the blue devils," retorted Janice, "than a scarlet fever."

"Hah, hah!" laughed a fellow-officer. "'Twas you got us into that, Sir Frederick. Lieutenant Hennion, your first task after to-morrow's ceremony is plain and clear.

"Would that I had the suppression of this rebellion!" groaned the baronet, "'stead of one which fights us with direst cold and hunger, to say nothing of the scurvy and the putrid fever."

For the next few hours cold and hunger and disease were not in evidence, however; and it took little persuasion from the squire, who dearly loved jovial company, to induce the visitors to stay on to tea, and then to supper.

While they were enjoying the latter, the interruption Janice had expected came at last. In the midst of the cheer, the hall door was swung back so quietly that no one observed it, and only when he who opened it spoke did those at table realise the new arrival. Then the sight of the blue uniform with buff facings brought every officer to his feet and set them glancing cornerward, to where their side arms were stood.

"I grieve to intrude upon so mirthful a company," apologised the new arrival, bowing. "But knowing of the unstinted hospitality of Greenwood, I made bold, Mrs. Meredith, to tell a friend that we could scarce fail of a welcome." Brereton turned to say, "This way, Harry, after thou'st disposed thy cloak and hat," and entered the room.

"Odds my life!" burst out the baronet, as the second interloper, garbed in Continental dragoon uniform, entered and bowed respectfully to the company. "What's to pay here?"

"But nay," went on Brereton, "I see your table is already filled, so we'll not inconvenience you by our intrusion. Perhaps, however, Miss Janice will fill us each a glass from yon bowl of punch. 'Tis a long ride to Morristown, and a stirrup cup will not be amiss. Yet stay again. Let me first puff off my friend to you. Ladies and gentleman, Captain Henry Lee, better known as Light Horse Harry."

"May I perish, but this impudence passes belief!" gasped one of the officers. "Dost think thou'rt not prisoners?"

"Ho, Jack! I told thee thy harebrainedness and love of adventure would get us into the suds yet," spoke up Lee. "Then the ninety light horse whom we left surrounding the house are thy troops?" he questioned laughingly, of the four officers.

"Devil pick your bones, the two of you!" swore Mobray. "Wast not enough that we should be so confoundedly gapped, but you must come with the bowl but half emptied. Hast thou no bowels for gentlemen and fellow-officers?"

"Fooh!" quizzed Brereton. "Pick up the bowl and down with it at a gulp, man. Never let it be said that an officer of the Welsh Fusileers made bones of a half-full—" There the speaker caught himself short, and suddenly turned his back on the table.

"Whom have we here?" demanded the baronet. "By Heavens, Charlie, who'd think— Does Sir William know of—?"

"Sdeath!" cried Jack, facing about, and meeting the questioner eye to eye. "Canst not hold thy tongue, man?" Then he went on less excitedly: "I am Lieutenant-Colonel John Brereton, aide-de-camp to his Excellency General Washington."

For a moment Sir Frederick stood speechless, then he held out his hand, saying: "And a good fellow, I doubt not, despite a bad trade. Fair lady," he continued after the handshake, "since we are doomed for the moment to be captives of some one other than thee, help to cheer us in the exchange by filling us each a parting glass. Come, Charlie, canst give us one of thy old-time toasts?"

Brereton laughed, as he took a glass from the girl. "'Tis hardly possible, with ladies present, to fit thy taste, Fred. However, here goes: Honour, fame, love, and wealth may desert us, but thirst is eternal."

"Even in captivity, thank a kind Providence," ejaculated one of the officers, as he set down his drained tumbler.

"Now, gentlemen, boots and saddles, an' it please you," suggested Lee, politely.

"Thee'll not force a wounded man to take such exposure," protested Mrs. Meredith. "Lieutenant Hennion—"

Brereton carried on the speech: "Can drink punch and study *divinity*. I'll warrant he's not so near to death's door but he can bear one-half the ride of our poor starved troopers and beasts."

"Farewell, Miss Janice," groaned the baronet; "'t was thy beauty baited this trap."

Jack lingered a moment after Lee and the prisoners had passed into the hallway.

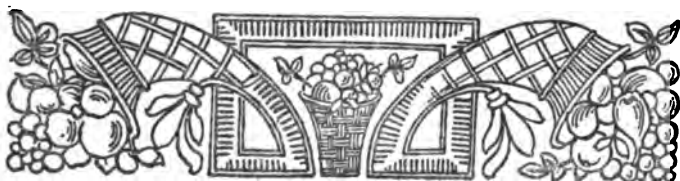
"Can I have a moment's word with you apart, Miss Meredith?" he asked.

"Most certainly not," spoke up the squire, recovering from the dumbness into which the rapid occurrences of the last three minutes had reduced him. "If ye have aught to say to my lass, out with it here."

"'T is — 't is just a word of farewell."

"I like not thy farewells," answered the girl, colouring.

"For once we agree, Miss Janice," replied the officer, boldly; "and did it rest with me, there should never be another." He bowed, and went to the door. "Mr. Meredith," he said, "I've stolen a husband from your daughter. 'T is a debt I am ready to pay on demand."



XXXVIII

BLACK AND WHITE

HOW much the squire would have grieved over the capture of his almost son-in-law was never known, for events gave him no opportunity. Spring was now come, and with it the breaking up of winter quarters. The moment the roads were passable, the garrison of Brunswick, under the command of Cornwallis, marched up the Raritan to Middle Brook, driving back into the Jersey hills a detachment of the Continental army. In turn Washington's whole force was moved to the support of his advance, but the British had fallen back once more to their old position. Early in June, Howe himself arrived at Brunswick, bringing with him heavy reinforcements, and first threatened a movement toward the Delaware, hoping to draw Washington from his position; but the latter, surmising that his opponent would never dare to jeopardise his communications, was not to be deceived. Disappointed in this, the British faced about quickly, and tried to surprise the Americans by a quick march upon their encampment, only to find them posted along a strong piece of ground, fully prepared for a conflict. Although the British outnumbered the Continentals almost twice over, the deadly shooting of the latter had been so often experienced that Howe dared not assault their position, and after a few days of futile waiting, his army once more fell back on Brunswick, crossed the Raritan to Amboy, and then was ferried across to Staten Island. Washington, by holding his force in a menacing position, without either marching or attacking, had saved not merely his troops, but Philadelphia as well; and Howe learned that if the capital was to be captured, it could not be by the direct march of his command

across the Jerseys, but must be by the far slower way of conveying it by ships to the southward.

Before the campaign opened, Mr. Meredith had been loud and frequent in complaints over his lack of stock and labour with which to cultivate his farm. Had he been better situated, however, it is probable that his groans would have been multiplied fivefold, for he would have seen whatever he did rendered useless by this march and counter-march of belligerents. Thrice the tide of war rolled over Greenwood; and though there was not so much as a skirmish within hearing of the homestead, the effects were almost as serious to him and to his tenantry. When the British finally evacuated the Jerseys, scarce a fence was to be found standing in Middlesex County, having in the two months' manœuvring been taken for camp-fires, and the frames of many an outbuilding had been used for similar purposes.

The depleted larders of Greenwood, together with the small prospect of replenishing them from his own farm, drove the squire to the necessity of pressing his tenants for the half-yearly rentals. Whatever his needs, the attempt to collect them was thoroughly unwise; Mr. Meredith, as a fact, being in better fortune than many of his tenants, for they had seen their young crops ridden over, or used as pasture, by the cavalry of both sides, and were therefore not merely without means of paying rent, but were faced by actual want for their own families. The surliness or threats with which the squire's demands were met should have proven to him their impolicy; but if to the simple-minded landlord a debt was a debt and only a debt, he was quickly to learn that there are various ways of payment. No sooner had the Continental army followed Howe across the Raritan, and thus left the country-side to the government, or lack of government, of its own people, than the tenants united in a movement designed to secure what might legally be termed a stay of proceedings, and which possessed the illegal advantage of being at once speedy and effective.

One night in July the deep sleep of the master of Greenwood was interrupted by a heavy hand being laid on his shoulder, and ere he could blink himself into effective eye-

sight, he was none too politely informed by the spokesman of four masked men who had intruded into his conjugal chamber, that he was wanted below. While still dazed, the squire was pulled, rather than helped, out of bed, and Mrs. Meredith, who tried to help him resist, was knocked senseless on the floor. Down the stairs and out of the house he was dragged, his progress being encouraged by such cheering remarks as, "We'll teach you what Toryism comes ter." "Where's them tools of old George you've been a-feeding, now?" "Want your rents, do you? Well, pay day's come."

On the lawn were a number of men similarly masked, grouped about a fire over which was already suspended the tell-tale pot. To this the squire was carried, his night-shirt roughly torn from his back; and while two held him, a coating of the hot tar was generously applied with a broom, amid screams of pain from the unfortunate, echoed in no minor key by Janice and the slave servants, all of whom had been wakened by the hubbub. Meantime, one of the law-breakers had returned to the house, and now reappeared with Mrs. Meredith's best feather-bed, which was hastily slashed open with knives, and the squire ignominiously rolled in the feathers, transforming that worthy at once to an appearance akin to an ill-plucked fowl of mammoth proportions.

Although, as already noted, the fences had disappeared from the face of the land, with the same timeliness which had been shown in the production of the mattress, a rail was now introduced upon the scene, and the miserable object having been hoisted thereon, four men lifted it to their shoulders. A slight delay ensued while the squire's ankles were tied together, and then, with the warning to him that, "If yer don't sit right and hold tight, ye'll enjoy yer ride with yer head down and yer toes up," the men started off at a trot down the road. Sharing the burden by turns, the squire was carried to Brunswick, where, daylight having come, he was borne triumphantly twice round the green, amid hoots and yells from a steadily growing procession, and then was finally ferried across the river and dumped on the opposite bank with the warning from the spokesman that



"Over the fire was suspended the tell-tale pot."



worse would come to him if he so much as dared show his face again within the county.

Lack of apparel and an endeavour to revive Mrs. Meredith had kept Janice within doors during the actual tarring and feathering ; but so soon as the persecutors set off for Brunswick, the girl left her now conscious though still dizzy mother, hastily dressed, and started in pursuit, the alarm for her father quite overcoming her dread of the masked rioters. Try her best, they had too long a start to be overtaken, and when she reached the village, it was to learn from a woman to whom she appealed for information what Mr. Meredith's fate had been. Still suffering the keenest anxiety, the girl went to the ferryman's house, and begged to be rowed across the river, but he shook his head.

"Cap' Bagby's assoomed command, ontill we gits resottled, an' his orders wuz thet no one wuz ter be ferried onless they hez a pass ; so, ef yer set on followin' yer dad, it's him yer must see. I guess he ain't far from the tavern."

This proved a correct inference, for Joe, glass in hand, was sitting on a bench near the doorway, watching and quizzing the publican as that weather-cock laboured to unscrew the rings which suspended his sign in the air.

"Who's name are you going to paint in this time, Si?" he questioned, as the girl came within hearing.

The tavern-keeper, having freed the sign-board from the support, descended with it. "This 'ere tavern's got tew git along without no sign," he said, as he mopped his brow. "I'm jus' wore out talkin' first on one side o' my mouth, an' next on t' other."

"You ain't tired, I guess, of lining first one pocket and then the other?" surmised Bagby.

"'T ain't fer yer tew throw that in my teeth," retorted the publican. "It's little money o' yours has got intew my pocket, Joe, often as yer treat yerself an' the rest."

Janice went up to the captain. "Mr. Bagby, I want to go across the river to my father, and —" so far she spoke steadily, her head held proudly erect ; but then, worn out with the anxiety, the fatigue, and the heat, her self-control suddenly deserted her, and she collapsed on the bench and began to sob.

"Now, miss," expostulated Bagby, "there is n't any call to take on so." He took the girl's hand in his own. "Here, take some of my swizzle. 'T will set you right up."

Before the words had passed his lips, Janice had jerked her hand away and was on her feet. "Don't you dare touch me," she said, her eyes flashing.

"I was only trying to comfort you," asserted Joe, while the tavern loungers gave vent to various degrees of laughter.

"Then let me go to my father."

"Can't for a moment," answered Bagby, angrily. "He's shown himself inimical to his country, and we must n't on no account allow communications with the enemy. That's the rule as laid down in the general orders, and in a Congress resolution."

Bagby's voice, quite as much as his words, told the girl that argument was useless, and without further parley she walked away. She had not gone ten paces when the publican overtook her and asked:—

"Say, miss, where be yer a-goin'?"

"Home," answered Janice.

"Then come yer back an' rest a bit in the settin'-room, an' I'll have my boy hitch up an' take yer thar. 'Tis a mortal warm day, an' I calkerlate yer 've walked your stent." He put his hand kindly on her arm, and the girl obediently turned about and entered the tavern.

"You are very kind," she said huskily.

"That's all right," he replied. "The squire's done me a turn now an' agin, an' then quality's quality, though 't ain't fer the moment havin' its way."

While she awaited the harnessing, Bagby came into the room.

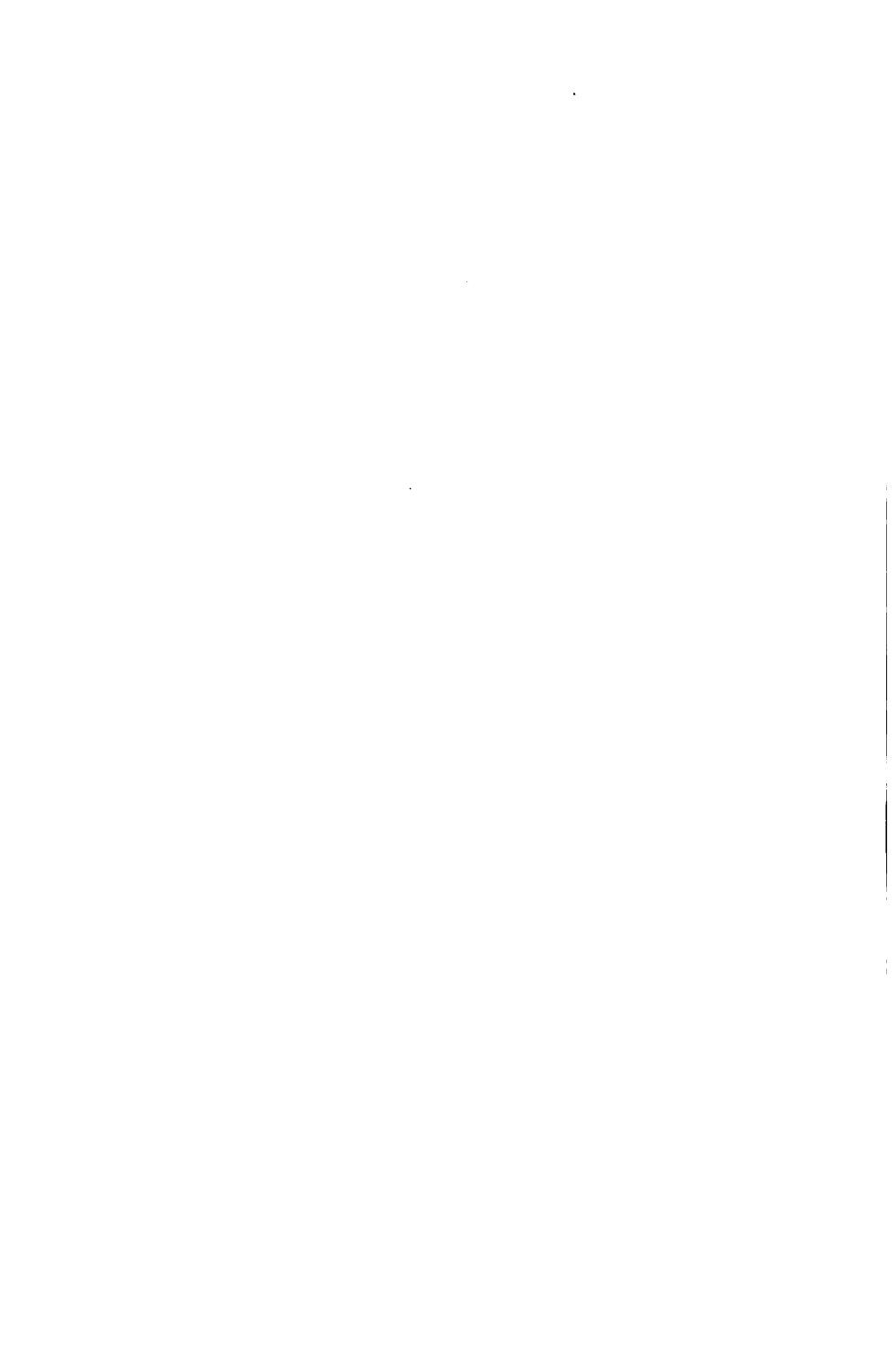
"I wanted to say something to you, miss, but I guessed it might fluster you with all the boys about," he said. "Has the squire ever told you anything concerning a scheme I proposed to him?"

"No," Janice replied, coldly.

"Well, perhaps he would have, if he could have seen forward a little further. It's being far-seeing that wins, miss." The speaker paused, as if he expected a response, but getting none,



"She collapsed on the bench and began to sob."



he continued, "Would you like to see him home, and everything quiet and easy again?"

"Oh!" said the girl, starting to her feet. "I'd give anything if—"

"Now we're talking," interjected the captain, quite as eagerly. "Only say that you'll be Mrs. Bagby, and back he is before sundown, and I'll see to it that he is n't troubled no more."

Janice had stepped forward impulsively, but she shrank back at his words as if he had struck her; then without a word she walked from the room, went to where the cart was being got ready, and rested a trembling hand upon it, as if in need of support, while her swift breathing bespoke the intensity of her emotion.

At Greenwood she found her mother still suffering from the fright and the blow too much to allow the girl to tell her own troubles, or to ask counsel for the future, and the occupation of trying to make the sufferer more comfortable was in fact a good diversion, exhausted though she was with her fruitless journey.

Before Mrs. Meredith was entirely recovered, or any news of the squire had reached the household, fresh trouble was upon them. Captain Bagby and two other men drove up the third morning after the incursion, and, without going through the form of knocking, came into the parlour.

"You'll get ready straight off to go to Philadelphia," the officer announced.

"For what?" demanded Mrs. Meredith.

"The Congress's orders is that any one guilty of seeking to communicate with the enemy is to be put under arrest, and sent to Philadelphia to be examined."

"But we have n't made the slightest attempt, nor so much as thought of it," protested the matron.

"Oh, no!" sneered Joe; "but, all the same, we intercepted a letter last night written to you by your old Tory husband, and—"

"Oh, prithee," broke in Janice, without a thought of anything but her father, "was he well, and where is he?"

"He was smarting a bit when he wrote," Bagby remarked

with evident enjoyment, "but he's got safe to his friends on Staten Island, so we are n't going to let you stay where you can be sneaking news to the British through him. I'll give you just half an hour to pack, and if you are n't done then, off you goes."

Protests and pleadings were wholly useless, though Joe yielded so far as to suggestively remark in an aside to the girl, that "there was one way that you know of, for fixing this thing." Getting together what they could in the brief time accorded to them, and with vague directions to Peg and Sukey as to the care of all they were forced to leave behind, the two women took their places in the waggon, and with only one man to drive them, set out for their enforced destination.

How little of public welfare and how much of private spite there was in their arrest was proven upon their arrival the following day in the city of brotherly love. The escort, or captor, first took them to the headquarters of the general in command of the Continental forces of the town, only to find that he was inspecting the forts down the Delaware. Leaving the papers, he took his charges to the Indian King Tavern, and after telling them that they'd hear from the general "like as not to-morrow," he departed on his return to Brunswick.

Whether the papers were mislaid by the orderly to whom they had been delivered, or were examined and deemed too trivial for attention, or, as is most probable, were prevented consideration by greater events, no word came from headquarters the next day, or for many following ones. Nor could the initiative come from the captives, for Mrs. Meredith sickened the second day after their arrival, and developed a high fever on the third, which the physician who was called in declared to be what was then termed putrid fever, — a disease to which some three hundred of the English and Hessian soldiery at Brunswick had fallen victims during the winter. Under his advice, and without hindrance from the innkeeper, who took good care to forget that he was to "keep tight hold on the prisoners till the general sends for 'em," she was removed to quieter lodgings on Chestnut Street.

The nursing, the anxiety, and the isolation all served to make public events of no moment to Janice, though from the

doctor or her loquacious landlady she heard of how Burgoyne's force, advancing from Canada, had captured Ticonderoga, and of how Sir William had put the flower of his army on board of transports and gone to sea, his destination thus becoming a sort of national conundrum affording infinite opportunity for the wiseacres of the taverns.

Mrs. Meredith, for the sake of the quiet, had been put in the back room, the daughter taking that on the street, and this arrangement, as it proved, was a fortunate one. Late in August, after a hard all-night's tendance of her mother, Janice was relieved, once the sun was up, by the daughter of the lodging-house keeper, and wearily sought her chamber, with nothing but sleep in her thoughts, if thoughts she had at all, for, too exhausted to undress, she threw herself upon the bed. Scarcely was her head resting on the pillow when there came from down the street the rattle of drums and the squeaks of fifes, and half in fright, and half in curiosity, the girl sprang up and pushed open her blinds.

Toward the river she could see what looked like an approaching mob, but behind them could be distinguished horsemen. As she stood, the rabble ran, or pattered, or, keeping step to the music, marched by, followed by a drum-and-fife corps. After them came the horsemen, and the girl's tired eyes suddenly sparkled and her pale face glowed, as she recognised, pre-eminent among them, the tall, soldierly figure of Washington, sitting Blueskin with such ease, grace, and dignity. He was talking to an odd, foreign-looking officer of extremely youthful appearance—whom, if Janice had been better in touch with the gossip of the day, she would have known to be the Marquis de Lafayette, just appointed by Congress a major-general; and while the commander-in-chief bowed and removed his hat in response to the cheers of the people, this absorption prevented him from seeing the girl, though she leaned far out of the window in the hope that he would do so. To the lonely, worried maid it seemed as if one glance of the kindly blue eyes, and one sympathetic grasp of the large, firm hand, would have cut her troubles in half.

After the group of officers came the rank and file,—lines of men no two of whom were dressed alike, many of them

without coats, and some without shoes; old uniforms faded or soiled to a scarcely recognisable point, civilian clothing of all types, but with the hunting-shirt of linen or leather as the predominant garb; and equipped with every kind of gun, from the old Queen Anne musket which had seen service in Marlborough's day to the pea rifle of the frontiersman. A faint attempt to give an appearance of uniformity had been made by each man sticking a sprig of green leaves in his hat, yet had it not been for the guns, cartouch boxes, powder horns, and an occasional bayonet and canteen, only the regimental order, none too well maintained, differentiated the army from the mob which had preceded them.

While yet the girl gazed wistfully after the familiar figure, her ears were greeted with a still more familiar voice.

"Close up there and dress your lines, Captain Balch. If this is your 'Column in parade,' what, in Heaven's name, is your 'March at ease'?" shouted Brereton, cantering along the column from the rear.

He caught sight of Janice as he rode up, and an exclamation of mingled surprise and pleasure burst from him. Throwing his bridle over a post, he sprang up the three steps, lustily hammered with the knocker, and in another moment was in the girl's presence.

"This is luck beyond belief," he exclaimed, as he seized her hand. "Your father wrote me from New York, begging that I see or send you word that he was well, and asking that you be permitted to join him. At Brunswick I learned you were here, but, seek you as I might, I could not get wind of your whereabouts. And now I cannot bide to aid you, for we are in full march to meet the British."

"Where?"

"They have landed at the head of the Chesapeake, so we are hastening to get between them and Philadelphia, and only diverged from our route to parade through the streets this morning, that the people might have a chance to see us, so 't is given out, but in fact to overawe them; for the city is none too loyal to us, as will be shown in a few days, when they hear of our defeat."

"You mean?" questioned the girl.

"General Washington, generous as he always is, has sent some of his best regiments to Gates, and so we are marching eleven thousand ill-armed and worse officered men, mostly new levies, to face on open ground nineteen thousand picked troops. What can come but defeat in the field? If it depended on us, the cause would be as good as ended, but they are beaten, thanks to their dirty politics, before they even face us."

"I don't understand."

"Tis simple enough when one knows the undercurrents. Germaine was against appointing the Howes, and has always hated them. So he schemes this silly side movement of Burgoyne's from Canada, and plans that the army at New York shall be but an assistant to that enterprise, with no share in its glory. Sir William, however, sloth though he be, saw through it, and, declining to be made a cat's-paw, he gets aboard ship, to seek laurels for himself, leaving Burgoyne to march and fight through his wilderness alone. Mark me, the British may capture Philadelphia, but if we can but keep them busy till it is too late to succour Burgoyne, the winter will see them the losers and not the gainers by the campaign. But there," he added, "I forget that all this can have but small interest to you."

"Oh," cried Janice, "you would n't say that if you knew how good it is just to hear a friend's voice." And then she poured out the tale of her mother's illness and of her own ordeal.

"Would that I could tarry here and serve and save you!" groaned Brereton, when she had ended; "but perhaps luck will attend us, and I may be able to hurry back. Have you money in plenty?"

The girl faltered, for in truth there had been little cash at Greenwood when they were called upon to come away, and much of that little was already parted with for lodgings and medicines. Yet she managed to nod her head.

Her pretence did not deceive Jack, and in an instant his purse was being forced into her unwilling fingers. "The fall in our paper money gives a lieutenant-colonel a lean scrip in these days, but what little I have is yours," he said.

"I can't take it," protested Janice, trying to return the wallet.

Brereton was at the door ere her hand was outstretched. "Thy father's letters to me are in the purse, so thou must keep it," he urged. "It's a toss whether I ever need money again, but if I weather this campaign, we'll consider it but a loan, and if I don't, 't is the use of all others to which I should wish it put." This he said seriously, and then more lightly went on: "And besides, Miss Janice, I owe you far more than I can ever pay. We Whigs may forcibly impress, but at least we tender what we can in payment. Keep it, then, as a beggar's poor thanks for the two happiest moments of his life." The aide passed through the doorway, and the next moment a horse's feet clattered in the street.

Janice stood listening till the sound had died out of hearing, then, overcome by this first kindness after such long weeks of harshness and trial, she kissed the purse. And if Brereton could have seen the flush of emotion that swept over her face with the impulsive act, it is likely that something else would have been kissed as well.



XXXIX

SHORT COMMONS

THE moment's cheer that the brief dialogue with Brereton brought Janice was added to by the reading of the two letters from her father to him, which reaffirmed and amplified the little the aide had told her, and ended that source of misery. And, as if his advent in fact marked the turn of the tide, the doctor announced the next day that Mrs. Meredith's typhoid had passed its crisis, and only good nursing was now needed to insure a safe recovery. The girl's prayers suddenly changed from ones of supplication to ones of thanksgiving; and she found herself breaking into song even when at her mother's bedside, quite forgetful of the need for quiet. This she was especially prone to do while she helped the long hours of watching pass by knitting on a silken purse of the most complicated pattern.

The materials for this trifle were purchased on the afternoon following the march of the Continental army, and for some days the progress was very rapid. Public events then interfered and checked both song and purse. On September 11 the low boom of guns was heard, and that very evening word came that the Continental army had been defeated at Brandywine. The moment the news reached Philadelphia an exodus of the timid began, which swelled in volume as the probability of the capture of the city grew. The streets were filled with waggons carting away the possessions of the people; the Continental Congress, which had been urging Washington to fight at all hazard, took to its heels and fled to Lancaster; and all others who had made themselves prominent in the Whig cause deserted the city. Among those who thought it necessary to go was the lodging-house keeper; for, her husband being an

officer of one of the row galleys in the river, she looked for nothing less than instant death at the hands of the British. With a plea to Janice, therefore, that she would care for the house and do what she could to save it from British plundering, the woman and her daughter departed. Her example was followed by the doctor, not from motives of fear, but from a purpose to join Washington's army as a volunteer. This threw upon the girl's shoulders the entire charge of her mother, and the cooking and providing as well; the latter by far the most difficult of all, for the farmers about Philadelphia were as much panic-stricken as the townspeople, and for a time suspended all attempts to bring their produce to market.

The two weeks of this chaos were succeeded by a third of unwonted calm, and then one morning as she opened the front door on her way to make her daily purchases, Janice's ears were greeted with the sound of military music. Turning up Second Street, curiosity hastening her steps, she became part of the crowd of women and children running toward the market, and arrived there just in time to see Harcourt's dragoons, followed by six battalions of grenadiers, march past to the tune of "God Save the King." Following these came Lord Cornwallis, and then four batteries of heavy artillery; and the crowd cheered the conquerors as enthusiastically and joyfully as they had Washington's ragged regiments so short a time before.

The advent of the British did not lessen the difficulties of Janice, as they not only promptly seized all the provisions of the town, but their main army, camped outside the city at Germantown, intercepted the few fresh supplies which the farmers successfully smuggled through Washington's lines above the city. Fresh beef rose to nine shillings the pound, bread to six shillings the quartern loaf, and everything else in like ratio. Though Brereton's loan furnished her with the wherewithal for the moment, each day's purchases made such inroads into it that the girl could not but worry over the future.

The stress she had foreseen came far sooner than even she had feared, or had reason to expect. Without warning, the tradespeople united in refusing to sell for Continental money;



“Janice helped the long hours pass by knitting on a silk purse.”

and Janice, when she went to make her usual purchases one day, found that she could buy nothing, and had but stinted and pinched herself only to husband what in a moment had become valueless.

At first the girl's distress was so great that she could think of no means of relief; but after hours of miserable and tearful worrying over her helplessness, her face suddenly brightened, and the cause of the change was revealed by her thrusting her hand into her neckerchief, to draw out the miniature of herself. With her knitting needle she pried up the glass and, removing the slip of ivory, laid it carefully in her housewife, heaving, let it be confessed, a little sigh, for it was hard to part with the one trinket she had ever owned. Unconscious of how many hours she had been dwelling on her troubles, she caught up her calash, and with the miniature frame in her hand, hurried to the front door; but the moment she had opened it, she was reminded that it was long after the closing of the markets, and so postponed whatever she had in mind for another day.

On the following morning she sallied forth, so engrossed in her difficulties, or her project, that she paid no heed to the distant sound of cannon, nor to the groups of townspeople who stood about on corners or stoops, evidently discussing something of interest; and it was only when she turned into the market-place, and found it empty alike of buyers and sellers that she was made to realise that something unusual was occurring.

"Why are all the stands closed this morning?" she asked of an urchin.

"'Cause nawthing's come ter town along of the fightin'."

"Fighting?"

"Guess you're a deafy," contemptuously suggested the youngster. "Don't you hear them guns? The grenadiers went out lickety split this mornin' and folks says they've got Washington surrounded, an' ll have him captured by night. All the other boys hez gone out on the Germantown road ter see the fun, but daddy said he'd lick me if I went, so I did n't dare," he added dejectedly. "Hurrah! There come some more wounded!" he cried, with sudden cheerfulness and break-

ing into a run as an army van came in sight down Second Street.

The girl turned away and went into one of the few shops which had opened its shutters.

"You would not take Continental money yesterday," she said to the proprietor; "but perhaps you—you will—I thought—I have no other kind of money, but perhaps you will accept this in payment?" Janice, with a flushed, anxious face, unwrapped from her handkerchief and laid down on the counter the miniature frame.

The man took it up and eyed it for a moment, then raised it to his mouth and pressed his teeth on the edge; satisfied by the experiment, he scrutinised the brilliants. "How d'ye come by this?" he demanded suspiciously.

"Oh, indeed, sir," explained Janice, growing yet redder, "it is mine, I assure you, given me by—that is, he said I might keep it."

"'Tain't for me to say it ain't yourn," responded the shop-keeper; "but the times is bad times and there's roguery of all sorts going on in the city." He looked it over again, and demanded, "Who does 'W. H. J. B.' mean?"

"I don't—I never knew," faltered Janice.

"Then where's the picture that was in it?"

"I—I took it out," explained the girl, "not wishing to part with that."

"That's just what ye would have done if ye'd not come by it by rights," replied the man.

"Then I'll put it back," hastily offered Janice, very much alarmed and flustered. "I—I never dreamed that—that the picture would make it worth any more."

"'T would have made it look more regular. How much d'ye want for it?"

"I thought—Would five pounds be too much?"

The shop-keeper laid the frame down on the counter and shoved it toward Janice. "No, I don't want it," he said.

"Would three pounds—?"

"I don't want it at no such price," interrupted the man.

"Oh," bewailed the girl, "what am I to do? The doctor said she was to have nourishing food; and I have nothing but a little corn meal left. Would you give me one pound for it?"

"I tell ye, I won't buy it at any price. And I don't even want it in the shop, so take it away. And if you want to keep out of jail, I would n't be offering it about; I've most a mind to call the watch myself, as 'tis."

The threat was enough to make Janice catch up the bijou and leave the shop almost at a run; nor did her pace lessen as she hurried homeward, and, safely there, she fast bolted the door. This done, with hands which trembled not a little, she replaced her portrait in the frame, hoping dimly from what the shopkeeper had said, that this would help to prove her ownership. Yet all that day and the succeeding one she stayed within doors, dreading what might come; and any unusual noise outside set her heart beating with fear that it might portend the approach of a danger all the more terrible that it was indefinite. As if her suffering were not great enough, an added horror was the army vans loaded with groaning wounded, which rumbled by her door during the sleepless night she spent.

As time lessened her fright, her necessities grew more pressing, and finally became so desperate, that, braving everything, she went boldly to headquarters, and asked for Lord Cornwallis.

She was referred by the sentry at the stoop to a room on the ground floor, her entrance being accompanied by the man shouting down the hallway: "Here's wan more av thim townsfolks, sir." Entering, Janice discovered two men seated at a table, each with a little pile of money at his elbow, passing the time with cards.

"Well," growled the one with his back to the door, "I suppose 'tis the usual tale: No bread, no meat, no firewood; sick wife, sick baby, sick mother, sick anything that can be whined about. Body o' me, must we not merely die by bullets or starvation, but suffer a thousand deaths meantime with endless whimpering!"

"Slowly, slowly, Mobray," advised he who faced Janice. "This is no nasal-voiced and putty-faced cowardly old Quaker. 'Tis a damned pretty maid, with eyes and a waist and an ankle fit to be a toast. Ay, and she can mantle divinely, when she's admired!"

"Ye don't foist that take-in on me, John André! I score six to my suit, and a quint is twenty-one, and a card played is twenty-two. — Well, graycoat, say your say, and don't stand behind me as a kill-joy."

"I wish to see Lord Cornwallis, Sir Frederick," faltered Janice, nerved only by thought of her mother, and ready to sink through the floor in her mortification.

At the sound of a woman's voice the officer turned his head sharply, and with the first glance he was on his feet. "Miss Meredith," he cried, "a thousand pardons! Who'd have thought to find you here? How can I serve you?"

"I wish to see Lord Cornwallis," repeated Janice.

"Tis evident you pay little heed to what has been occurring," replied Mobray, as he placed a chair for her. "We thought we had all the spirit beat out of Mr. Washington's pack o' ragamuffins; but, egad, day before yesterday, quite contrary to all the rules of polite warfare, and in a most ungentlemanly manner, they set upon us as we lay encamped at Germantown, and wellnigh gave us a drubbing. Lord Cornwallis went to Sir William's assistance, running his grenadiers at double quick the whole distance, and he has not yet returned."

"We deemed rebellion well under our heel when we gained possession of its capital," chimed in Captain André; "but Mr. Washington seems in truth to make a fourth with 'a dog, a woman, and a chestnut-tree, the more they are beat the better they be.' Our very successes are teaching his army how to fight, and I fear me the day will come when we shall have thrashed them into a victory."

"But all this is not helping Miss Meredith," spoke up Mobray. "Lord Cornwallis being beyond reach, can I not be of aid?"

In a few words the girl poured out the tale of her mother's sickness, and then with less glibness, and with reddened cheeks, of her moneyless and foodless condition.

Before she had well finished, the baronet swept up his pile of money on the table and held out the handful of coins to the girl.

"Oh, no," cried Janice, shrinking back. "I— Oh, I thank you, but I can't take your —"



MAJOR JOHN ANDRE,

*Adjutant General to his Majesty's Forces in Scotland,
under the Command of Sir Henry Clive.*

Printed by W. Verelst, at the Sign of the Crown, in the Strand, near the Royal Exchange, and by J. Verelst, at the Sign of the Crown, in the Strand, near the Royal Exchange.

"Ah, Miss Meredith," pleaded Sir Frederick, "I was less proud last winter when we were half starving in scurvy-plagued and fever-stricken Brunswick."

"But food was nothing," exclaimed Janice, "and that is all I want; just enough for my mother. I thought Lord Cornwallis might —"

"In truth, Miss Meredith, you ask for what is far scarcer than guineas in these days," said André. "The rebels hold the forts in the lower Delaware so tenaciously that our supply ships have not yet been able to get up to us, and as Washington's army is between us and the back country, we are as near in a state of siege as nineteen thousand men were ever put by an inferior force."

"Our men are on quarter rations, and we officers fare but little better," grumbled Mobray.

"Then what am I to do?" cried Janice, despairingly.

"Come, Fred," said André, "can't something be done?"

Mobray shook his head gloomily. "I did my best yesterday to get the wounded rebels given some soup and wine, or at least beef and biscuit that was n't rotten or full of worms, but 't was not to be done; there's too much profit in buying the worst and charging for the best."

"Damn the commissary! say I," growled André, "and let his fate be to starve ever after on the stuff he palms on us as fit to eat."

"Amen," remarked a voice outside, and Lord Clowes stepped into the room. "I'll take hell and army rations, Captain André, rather than lose the pleasure of your society," he added ironically.

"Small doubt I shall be found there," retorted André, derisively; "but I fear me we shall be no better friends, Baron Clowes, than we are here. There is a special furnace for *paroled prisoners*!"

"Blast thy tongue, but that insult shall cost thee dear!" returned the commissary, white with rage. "To whom shall I send my friend, sir?"

"Hold, André," broke in Mobray, "let me answer, not for you, but for the army." He faced Clowes and went on.

"When you have surrendered yourself into the hands of the rebels, and have been properly exchanged, sir, you may be able to find a British officer to carry a challenge on your behalf; until then no man of honour would lower himself by fighting you."

"I make Sir Frederick's answer mine, my Lord," said André, "and I suggest, as a lady is present, that we put a finish to our war of words, which can come to nothing."

The commissary gave a quick glance about the room, and as he became aware of the presence of Janice, he uttered an exclamation and started forward with outstretched hand. "Miss Meredith!" he ejaculated. "By all that's wonderful!"

Mobray made an impulsive movement as Clowes stooped and kissed the girl's hand, almost as if intending to strike the baron; but checking himself, he sarcastically remarked, with a frowning face: "If you enjoy the favour of his Lordship, Miss Meredith, you need not look further for help. We fellows who fight for our country barely get enough to keep life in us, but the commissariat knows not short commons. Mr. Commissary-General, you have an opportunity to aid Miss Meredith that you should not have were it in my power to forestall you."

"Come to my office, Miss Janice," requested Clowes, perhaps glad to get away from the presence of the young officers. He led the way across the hallway to another room, and, after the two were seated, would have taken the girl's hand again had she not avoided his attempt.

In the fewest possible words Janice retold her plight, broken only by interjections of sympathy from her listener, and by two futile endeavours to gain possession of her hand.

"Have no fear of any want in the future," he exclaimed heartily. "In truth, Miss Meredith, on our entrance we seized much that was unfit for the troops, while since then the military necessities have compelled the destruction of many of the finest houses about Germantown, and I took good care that what store of delicacies and wines they might hold should not be destroyed along with them. But give me thy number, and thy mother shall have all that she needs." Clowes caught the maiden's hand, and though she rose with the action, and

slightly shrank away from him, this time he had his will and kissed it hotly.

Janice gave the address and thanked him with warm words of gratitude, somewhat neutralised by her trying to free her hand.

Instead of yielding to her wish, the commissary only tightened his grasp. "Ye have owed me something for long," he said, drawing her toward him in spite of her striving. "Surely I have earned it to-day."

"Lord Clowes, I beg —" began Janice; but there she ended the plea, and, throwing her free arm as a shield before her face, she screamed.

Instantly there was a sound of a falling chair, and both the card-players burst into the room.

Quick as they were, Clowes had already dropped his hold, and at a respectful distance was saying: "The wine and food shall reach ye within the hour, Miss Meredith."

Janice silently curtsied her thanks, and darted past the young officers, alike anxious to escape explanation to them, or further colloquy with her persecutor.

In this latter desire the girl secured but a brief postponement, for she was not long returned when the knocker summoned her to the front door, and on the steps stood the commissary and two soldiers laden with a basket apiece.

"Ye see I'm true to my word, Miss Meredith," said Lord Clowes. "Give me the whiskets, and be off with ye," he ordered to the men; and then to the girl continued: "Where will ye have them bestowed?"

"Oh, I'll not trouble thee," protested Janice, blocking the entrance, "just hand them to me."

"Nay, 't is no trouble," the officer assured her, setting one foot over the sill. "And, besides, I have word of your father to tell ye."

Reluctantly the maiden gave him passage, and pointed out a place of deposit in the entry for his burden. Then she fell back to the staircase, and went up a few steps. Yet she eagerly questioned: "What of my father?"

Clowes came to the foot of the ascent. "He is on one of the transports in the lower Delaware, and as soon as we can

reduce the rebel works, and break through their cursed *chevaux-de-frise*, he will come up to Philadelphia."

"Oh," almost carolled Janice, "what joyous news!"

"And does the bringer deserve no reward?"

"For that, and for the food, I thank you deeply, Lord Clowes," said the girl, warmly.

"I'm not the man to take my pay in mere lip music," answered the commissary. "Harkee, Miss Meredith, there is a limit to my forbearance of thy skittishness. Thou wast ready enough to wed me once, and I have never released thee from the bargain. Henceforth I expect a lover's privileges until they can be made those of a husband." Clowes took two steps, upward.

"I think, Lord Clowes, that 't is hardly kind of you to remind me of my shame," replied Janice, with a gentle dignity very close to tears. "Deceitful I was and disobedient, and no one can blame me more than I have come to blame myself. But you are not the one to speak of it nor to pretend that my giddy conduct was any pledge."

"Then am I to understand that I was lover enough when thy needs required it, but that now I am to be jilted?" demanded the man, harshly.

"Your version is a cruel one that I am sure you cannot think just."

"Ye hold to it that ye are not bound to me?"

"Yes."

The commissary fell back to where he had set the baskets. "In your necessity ye felt otherwise, and I advise ye to remember that ye still require my aid. I am not one of those who lavish favours and expect no return, though a good friend to those who make it worth my while. If I am to have naught from ye, ye shall have naught from me." He picked up the baskets. "Here is milk, bread, meat, jellies, and wines, to be had for a price, and only for a price."

"Oh, prithee, Lord Clowes," begged Janice, despairingly, "you cannot seek to advantage yourself of my desperate plight. All I had to give my mother this morning was some water gruel, and I have not tasted food myself for a twenty-four hours."

"Your anxiety for your mother cannot be over great. I only ask ye to avow that ye consented to become my wife, and should have done so, had we been left free."

The girl wavered ; then buried her face in her hands, and in a scarcely audible voice said : "I did intend — for a brief space — did think to — to marry you."

"And ye 've never given a promise to another man?"

"Never."

Clowes set down the baskets. "That is all I wished acknowledged," he said. "I'll ask no more till ye have decided whether ye will be true to the troth ye have just confessed, Janice." He opened the front door, and added as he passed out : "When these supplies are exhausted, ye know where more is to be had."



XL

THE BATTLE FOR FOOD AND FORAGE

WHEN Janice came to examine the contents of the baskets, she was somewhat disappointed at the mess of pottage for which she had half bartered herself. Though every article the commissary had enumerated was to be found, it was in meagre quantities, and the girl was shrewd-witted enough to divine the giver's intention, — that she should be quickly forced again to appeal to him. Her mother's requirements and her own hunger, however, prevented dwelling on the future, and scarcely had these been attended to, when Mobray and André appeared, to inquire if her immediate needs were supplied, and with a plan of assistance.

"Miss Meredith," said Mobray, "Captain André and I have had assigned to us for quarters the Franklin house down on Second Street; and he and I have agreed that, if Mrs. Meredith can be moved, you are to come and share it with us."

"We ask it as a favour, which, if granted, will make us the envy of the army," remarked André. "And it will, I trust, not be an entirely one-sided benefit. The old fox's den is more than comfortable, Mobray and I have a couple of rankers as servants, one of whom has more or less attached to him a woman who cooks well enough to make even the present ration eatable, and, lastly, though our presence may be something of a handicap, yet in such unsettled times one must tolerate the dogs if they but keep out the wolves. Hang and whip as we may, the men will plunder, and some in high office are little better. Alone here, you are scarcely safe, but with us you need have no fear."

Janice attempted some objections, but her previous helplessness and loneliness, as well as her recent fright from the commissary, made them faint-hearted, and it needed little

urgency to win her consent to the plan. Her mother approving, a surgeon and an ambulance were secured, and before nightfall the removal was safely accomplished.

When, after the first good night's sleep she had enjoyed since her mother sickened, the girl was summoned to breakfast, she found that others had been more wakeful. In the middle of the table was a pail of milk, a pile of eggs, four unplucked fowls, and two sucking pigs, arranged with some pretence of ornament, with two officer's sword-knots to better the attempt at decoration, and the whole surmounted by a placard reading: "Only the brave deserve the fare."

"Gaze, Miss Meredith!" cried André, jubilantly. "See the results of a valour of which you were the inspiration! Marathon, Cressy, Fontenoy, and Quebec pale before the march, the conflict, and the retreat of last night, the glories of which would ne'er be credited, even alas! were it not necessary that they should ne'er be told."

"We held counsel concerning our larder," Sir Frederick explained, as the girl looked questioningly from man to man, "and agreed that since you had honoured us, we could not dare to starve you and Mrs. Meredith on salt pork and sea biscuit. So, last night, André and I, with our two servants, laid hold of a boat, crossed the Delaware, levied tribute on a fat Jersey farm, and returned ere day had come. Item. — To disobeying the general orders by stealing through the lines: one hundred lashes on the bare back. Item. — For ordering a soldier to break the rules of war: ten days in the guardhouse. Item. — For plundering, contrary to proclamation: death by shooting. Wilt drop a tear o'er my grave, fair lady?"

"Oh, sirs!" exclaimed Janice, "you should not — to take such risk —"

"Not since I went birds-nesting in Kent have I had such a night's sport," declared André, gleefully. "And the thought that we were checkmating that scoundrel Clowes did not bate the pleasure. If he were fit company for gentlemen we'd have him to dinner to-day, just to spoil his appetite with sight of our cates."

"You do not like — Why do you call Lord Clowes scoundrel?" asked Janice.

Mobray shrugged his shoulders as he made answer: "On enough grounds and to boot. But 't is sufficient that he gave his parole to the rebels, and then broke it by escaping to our lines. He is a living daily disgrace to the uniform we all wear, and yet his influence is so powerful with Sir William that we can do nothing against him. Pray Heaven that some day he'll not be able to keep in the rear, and that the rebels recapture and give him the rope he merits."

In contrast to the past, the next few days were very happy ones to Janice. Her mother mended steadily, and was soon able to come to meals and to stay downstairs. The servants relieved the girl of all the household drudgery, and spared her from all dwelling on her empty purse. As for the young officers, they could not do enough to entertain her, and, it is to be suspected, themselves. Piquet was quite abandoned, and in place of it nothing would do André but he must teach Janice to paint. Not to be thrown in the background, Mobray produced his flute, and, thanks to a fine harpsichord Franklin had imported for his daughter, was able to have numberless duets with the maiden. Then they took short rides to the south of the city, where the Delaware and Schuylkill safeguarded a restricted territory from rebel intrusion, and daily walks along the river-front or in the State House Gardens, where one of the bands of a few regiments garrisoning the city played every afternoon for the amusement of the officers and townspeople, and where Janice was made acquainted with many a young macaroni officer or feminine toast. Save for the high price of provisions, and the constant war talk, Philadelphia bore little semblance to being in a state of semi-siege, and the prize which two armies were striving to hold or win, not by actual conflict, but by a strategy which aimed to keep closed or to open sources of supplies.

Late in October Howe's army fell back from Germantown and took position just outside the city, where it was set to work throwing up lines of fortifications. And a startling rumour which seemed to come from nowhere, but which, in spite of denials from headquarters, spread like wildfire, supplied a reason for both the retrograde movement and the construction of blockhouses and redoubts.



“Nothing would do André but he must teach Janice to paint.”

"The rebels have the effrontery to give it out that they have captured General Burgoyne's whole force," sneeringly announced Mobray, as he returned from guard mount. "There seems no limit to the size of their lies."

"La! Sir Frederick," exclaimed Janice, "'t is just what Colonel — what somebody predicted. He said that if General Washington could but keep Sir William busy until it would be too late for him to go General Burgoyne's aid, all would be well at the end of the campaign."

"And having conceived the hope, they seek to bolster their cause by spreading the tale abroad," scoffed the baronet.

"*'Facile est inventis addere,'*" laughed André. "They are merely settling the moot point as to who is the father of invention."

"What rebel was it bubbled the conceit to you, Miss Meredith?" inquired Mobray.

"'T was Colonel Brereton," replied the girl, with a faint hesitation. Then she added, as if a new idea occurred to her, "So you see the American is not the father of invention, Colonel Brereton being an Englishman." Though spoken as an assertion, the statement had a definite question in it.

"Who is this fellow, who, like Charles Lee, fights against his own country?" asked André.

"No one you ever knew, John," replied Mobray; "but I, who do, have it not in my heart to blame him."

"Wilt not tell us his history?" begged Janice, eagerly. "Once he said his great-grandfather was King of England, and since then I've so longed to know it!"

"'T is truth he spoke, poor fellow, but he was an old-time friend of mine, which would be enough to seal my lips respecting his sorry tale, since he wishes oblivion for it. But I am his debtor as well, for he it was who helped me to a prompt exchange when I was taken prisoner last spring."

"Of course I would not have thee tell me anything that is secret," remarked Janice. Then, after a moment, she went on, "There is, however, something of which you may be able to inform me?"

"But name your desire."

"I must get it," announced the girl, and she left the room

and went upstairs. But once in the upper hallway, she did not go to her room, merely pausing long enough to take the miniature from its abiding spot, and then returned. "Wilt tell me if the diamonds are false?" she requested, placing the ornament in André's hand.

"No, for a certainty," replied the captain.

"Then is it not worth five pounds?" exclaimed Janice.

"Five pounds," laughed André, derisively. "'Tis easily worth five hundred!"

"Oh, never!" cried the girl.

"Ay. Am I not right, Mobray?"

"Beyond question. And then 'tis not worth the portrait it encircles," asserted Mobray, gallantly.

"And yet I could not get one pound for it," marvelled Janice, and told the two officers how she had sought to barter it.

"'Tis evident you asked too little, Miss Meredith," surmised André, "and so made him suspect your title."

"Would that you might offer it to me at a hundred times five pounds!" bemoaned the baronet. "To think of such a pearl being cast before such swine!"

"Who painted it, Miss Meredith?" asked André.

"'Twas Colonel Brereton."

Mobray looked up quickly at her, then once more at the miniature. He turned it over, and as the initials on the back caught his eye, he frowned, but more with intentness than anger. For a moment he held it, then handed it to Janice with the remark, "Know you the frame's history?"

"Only that it once held another portrait, and that of a most beautiful girl."

"Whom he forgot, it appears, once you were seen, for which small blame to him, Miss Meredith," replied Mobray, as he rose and left the room, his face set sternly, as if he were fighting some emotion.

For two days the young officers continued to get infinite amusement out of the rebel news, but on the third their gibes and flouts ceased, and a sudden gravity ensued, the cause of which was explained to the women that evening when the time had come for "good-night."

"Ladies," said André, "the route is ordered before day-break to-morrow, so we must say a farewell to you now, and leave you for a time to the sole charge of Mrs. O'Flaherty. She has orders from us, and from her putative spouse, to take the greatest care of you both, and we have endeavoured to arrange that you shall want for nothing during what we fervently hope will be but a brief absence."

"For what are you leaving us?" asked Mrs. Meredith.

"In truth, 't is a sorry business," growled Mobray. "Confirmation came last night of Burgoyne's capitulation, and this means that General Gates's army will at once effect a juncture with Washington's, and the combined force will give us more than we bargained to fight. Burgoyne's fiasco makes it all the more necessary that we hold Philadelphia, and so, as our one chance, we must, ere the union is effected, capture the forts on the Delaware, that our warships and supplies may come to us, lest, when the moment arrives for our desperate struggle, we be handicapped by short commons and no line of retreat."

"Wilt pray for our success, Miss Meredith?"

"Ay," urged the baronet, "for whatever your sympathies, remember that we fight this time to reunite you with your father."

And that night Janice made her first plea in behalf of the British arms.

The absence of Mobray and André brought the commissary once again to the fore. Previous to their departure he had dropped in upon the Merediths, only to receive a cool greeting from Janice, and such cold ones from the two captains as discouraged repetition. Now, relieved of their supercilious taunts and affronts, the baron became a daily visitor. He always brought gifts of delicacies, paid open court to Mrs. Meredith, and never once recurred to the words he had wrung from Janice, for the time making himself both useful and entertaining. From his calls the ladies learned the course of the war and of what the distant cannonading meant: of the bloody repulse of Donop's Hessians at Red Bank, of the burning of the Augusta 64, of the bombardment of the forts on Mud Island, and of the other desperate fighting by which the Brit-

ish struggled to free their jugular vein, the river, from the clutch of Washington's forces.

It was Clowes who brought them the best proof of the final triumph of the royal army, for one November morning he broke in upon their breakfast, unannounced, and with him came Mr. Meredith.

Had the squire ever doubted the affection of his wife and daughter, the next few minutes of inarticulate but ecstatic delight would have convinced him once for all. Mrs. Meredith, who, since her fever, had been unwontedly gentle and affectionate, welcomed him as he had not been greeted in years; and Janice, shifting from tears to laughter and back again, wellnigh choked him in her delight. Breakfast was forgotten, while the exile was made to tell all his adventures, and of how finally he had escaped from the ship on which perforce he had been for three months.

"'T was desperate fighting on both sides, but we were too many for them, and the river is free at last. The transport 'Surrey' was third to come up to the city, and the moment I was ashore I sought out Lord Clowes, hoping to get word of ye, and was not disappointed. Pox me! but I'd begun to think that never again should I see ye!"

There was so much to tell and to listen to in the next few days that the reunited family gave little heed to public events, though warm salutations and thanks were lavished on Mobray and André upon the return of the regiments which had operated against the forts.

An enforced change speedily brought them back to the present. The mustering of all the royal army, now swelled by reinforcements of three thousand troops hurriedly summoned from New York, compelled a rebilleting of the troops, and nine more officers were assigned by the quartermaster-general to the Franklin house, overcrowding it to such an extent as to end the possibility that it should longer shelter the Merediths. The squire went to Sir William Erskine, only to be told that as he was a civilian, the Quartermaster's Department could, or at least would, do nothing for him. An appeal to Clowes resulted better, for that officer offered to share his own lodgings with his friends, — a generosity which delighted Mr. Meredith,

but which put an anxious look on his daughter's face and a scowl on that of Mobray.

"I make no doubt 't was a well-hatched scheme from the start," he asserted. "Lord Clowes and Erskine are but Tom Tickle and Tom Scratch."

With the same thought in her own mind, Janice took the first opportunity to beg her father to seek further rather than accept the commissary's hospitality.

"Nay, lass," replied Mr. Meredith. "Beggars cannot be choosers, and that is what we are. Remember that I am without money, and have been so ever since those rascals hounded me from home. Had not Lord Clowes generously stepped forward as he has, we should be put to it to get through the winter without being frozen or starved. And your mother's health is not such as could stand either, that ye know."

"You are quite right, dad-da," assented the girl, as she stooped and kissed him. "I—I had a reason—which now I will not trouble you with—and selfishly forgot both mommy and our poverty." Then flinging her arms about his neck, she hid her head against his shoulder and said: "I am promised—you have given Philemon your word, and you'll not go back on it, will you, dad-da?" almost as if she were making a prayer.

"Odds my life! what scatter-brains women are born with!" marvelled Mr. Meredith. "No wonder the adage runs that 'a woman's mind and a winter's wind oft change'! In the name of evil, Jan, what started ye off on that tangent?"

"You will keep faith with him, dad-da?" pleaded the daughter.

"Of course I will," affirmed the squire. "And glad I am, lass, to find that ye've come to see that I knew not merely what was best for ye, but what would make ye happiest. If the poor lad is ever exchanged, 't will be glad news for him."

The removal to the commissary's quarters might have been for a time postponed, for barely had the new arrangement been achieved when another manœuvre well-nigh emptied the city of the British troops. Massing fourteen thousand soldiers, Howe sallied forth to attack the Continental army in its camp at Whitemarsh.

"We have word," Lord Clowes explained, "that Gates is playing his own game, and, instead of bringing his army to Mr. Washington's aid, he keeps tight hold of it, and has, after needless delay, sent him but a bare four thousand men. So, in place of waiting for an attack, Sir William intends to drive the rebels back into the hills, that we may obtain fresh provisions and forage as we need them."

The movement proved but a march up a hill to march down again, and four days later saw the British troops back in Philadelphia with only a little skirmishing and some badly frosted toes and ears to show for the sally, the young officers tingling and raging with shame at not having been allowed to fight the inferior Continental army.

The commissary, however, took it philosophically. "Their position was too strong, and they shoot too straight," he told his guests. "It will all turn for the best, since no army can keep the field in such weather, and Washington will be forced to go into winter quarters. He must then fall back on Lancaster and Reading, out of striking distance, leaving us free to forage on the country at will."

Once again his prediction was wrong. "That marplot of a rebel general has schemed a new method of troubling us," he grumbled angrily a week later. "Instead of wintering his troops in a town, as any other commander would, our spies bring us word that he has marched them to a strong position on Valley Creek, a bare twenty miles from here, and has them all as busy as beavers throwing up earthworks and building huts. If God does n't kindly freeze the devil's brood, they'll tie us into our lines just as they did last winter, and give us an ounce of lead for every pound of forage we seek. No sooner do we beat them, and take possession of a town, than they close in and put us in a state of siege, just as if they were the superior force. Small wonder that Sir William has written the Ministry that America can't be conquered, and asking his Majesty's permission to resign. A curse on the man who conceived such a mode of warfare!"



XLI

WINTER QUARTERS

NO sooner had the British returned from their brief sally than they settled into winter quarters, and gave themselves up to such amusements as the city afforded or they could create.

The commissary had taken good heed to have one of the finest of the deserted Whig houses in the city assigned to him, and whatever it had once lacked had been supplied. A coach, a chair, and four saddle-horses were at his beck and call; a dozen servants, some military and some slave, performed the household and stable work; a larder and a cellar, filled to repletion, satisfied every creature need, and their contents were served on plate and china of the richest.

"I faith," explained the officer, when Mr. Meredith commented on the completeness and elegance of the establishment, "'t is something to be commissary-general in these times; and since the houses about Germantown were to be destroyed, 't was contrary to nature not to take from them what would serve to make me comfortable. Their owners, be they friends or foes, are none the poorer, for they think it all perished in the flames, as it would have done but for my forethought."

However lavish the hospitality of Lord Clowes could be under these circumstances, it was not popular with the army, and such officers as came to eat and drink at his table were more remarkable for their gastronomic abilities than for their wits and manners. In his civilian guests the quality was better, the man being so powerful through his office that the best of the townfolk only too gladly gathered about his table when they were bidden, — an eagerness at which the commissary jeered even while he invited them.

"They are all to be bought," he sneered. "There is Tom Willing, who made the most part of his money importing

Guinea niggers, and now is in a mortal funk lest some of it, like them, shall run away. Two years ago he was a member of the rebel Congress and a partner of that desperate speculator Morris, with a hand thrust deep in the Continental treasury rag-bag. Now he has trimmed ship better than any of his slavers ever did, gone about on the opposite tack, and is so loyal to British rule that his greatest ambition is to get his other hand in some government contracts. He and his pretty wife will dine here every time they are asked, and so will all the rest, ye 'll see."

During the first days in their new domiciliary, Janice showed the utmost nervousness, seldom leaving her mother's or father's side, and never venturing into the hallways without a previous peep to see that they were empty. As the weeks wore on without any attempt on the commissary's part to surprise her into a *lle-à-lle*, to recur to the words he had forced her to utter, or to be anything but a polite, entertaining, and thoughtful host, the girl gained courage, and little by little took life more equably. She would have been been less easy, though better able to understand his conduct, had she overheard or had repeated to her a conversation between Lord Clowes and her father on the day that they first took up their new abode.

"A beggar's thanks are lean ones, Clowes," the squire had said, over the wine; "but if ever the dice cease from throwing me blanks, ye shall find that Lambert Meredith has not forgot your loans of home and money."

"Talk not to me in such strain, Meredith," replied the host, with the frank, hearty manner he could so well command. "I ask no better payment than your company, but 'tis in your power to shift the debt onto my shoulders at any time, and by a single word at that."

"How so?"

"It has scarce slipped thy memory that in a moment's mistrust of thee — which I now concede was both unfriendly and unjustifiable — I sought to run off with thy beautiful maid. She was ready to marry me out of hand; but give thy consent as well, and I shall be thy debtor for life."

"Ye know —" began Mr. Meredith.

"And what is more," went on the suitor, "though 't is not for me to make boast, I can assure ye that Lord Clowes is no bad match. In the last two years I've salted down nigh sixty thousand pounds in the funds and bank stock."

"Adzooks!" aspirated the squire. "How did ye that?"

"Hah, hah!" laughed the commissary, triumphantly. "That is what it is to play the cards aright. 'Twas all from being carried on that cursed silly voyage to the Madeiras which at that moment I deemed the work of the Evil One himself. I could get but a passage to Halifax, and by luck I arrived there just as Sir William put in with the fleet from Boston. We had done a stroke or two of business in former times, and so I was able to gain his ear, and unfold a big scheme to him."

"And what was that?"

"Hah! a great scheme," reiterated Clowes, smacking his lips, after a long swallow of spirits. "Says I, make me commissary-general, and I'll make our fortunes. We'll impress food and forage, and the government shall pay us for every pound of—"

"'Twas madness," broke in Mr. Meredith. "Dost not know that nothing has so stirred the people as the taking their crops without payment?"

"Like as not," assented the commissary; "but 't is also the way to subdue them. They began a war, and they must pay the usual penalty until they are sickened of it. And since the seizures were to be made, 't was too good a chance not to turn an honest penny. Pray Heaven they don't lay down their arms too soon, for I ambition to be wealthier still. Canst hope better for your daughter than that she be made Lady Clowes, and rich to boot?"

"She's promised—" began the squire, but once again the suitor cut him off.

"She herself told me she is pledged to no one but me."

"Nay, I've passed my word to Lieutenant Hennion."

"Chut! A subaltern who'll bless his stars if he ever is allowed to starve on a captain's pay. Thou canst not really mean to do thy daughter such an injury?"

"My word is passed; and Lambert Meredith breaks not

that. The lad's a good boy, too, who'll make her a good husband, with a fine estate, if peace ever comes again in the land."

The officer thrummed a moment on the table. "Then 't is only thy word to this fellow, and no want of friendliness that leads thee to give me nay?" he asked.

"Of that ye may be sure," assented Mr. Meredith, eagerly availing himself of the easy escape from the quandary that his host made for him.

"And but for the promise ye 'd give her to me?"

The father hesitated and swallowed before he made reply, and when the words came, it was with an observable reluctance that he said: "Ye should know that."

"That is all I ask," cried the commissary. "I knew ye were not the man to eat another's bread and not do what ye could for him. We'll not hope for harm to the lad, but if the camp fever or small-pox or aught else should come to him, I'll remind ye of the promise ye've just spoken, sure that the man who won't break his word to one won't to t' other."

"That ye may tie to," acceded Mr. Meredith, though with a dubious manner, as if something perplexed him. And in his own room that evening he paused for a moment after removing his wig and remarked to himself: "Promise I suppose I did, though I ne'er intended it. Well, let's hope that Phil gets her; and if some miscarriage prevents, 't is something that she should be made great and rich, though I wish the money had come in some more honest way to a more honest man."

As for the commissary, once retired to his own room, he wrote a letter which he superscribed "To David Sproat, Deputy Commissary of Prisoners at New York." But this done, he tore it up, and tossed the fragments into the fire, with the remark: "Why should I put my name to it, when Loring or Cunningham can give the order just as well? I'll see one or t' other to-morrow, and so prevent all chance of its being traced to me." Then he sat looking for a time at the embers reflectively. "'T is folly to want her," he said finally, as he rose and began the removal of his coat, "now that ye need not her money; but she's enough to tempt any man with

blood in his veins, and I can afford the whim. Keep that blood in check, however, till ye have her fast; and do not frighten her as ye have done. To think of Lord Clowes, cool enough to match any man, losing his head over a whiffing bit of woman-flesh! What devil's baits they are!"

Put at ease by the commissary's conduct toward her, Janice entered eagerly into the gaiety with which the army beguiled the tedium of winter quarters. Dislike of Clowes precluded André and Mobray from coming to the house, but they saw much of the maiden elsewhere. She and Peggy Chew had been made known to each other by André early in the British occupation, and they promptly established the warm friendship that girls of their age so easily form, and spent many hours together. The two captains were quick to discover that the Chew house was a pleasant one, and became almost as constant visitors there as Janice herself. At André's suggestion the painting lessons were resumed, with Miss Chew as an additional pupil, and he undertook to teach them French as well; the music, too, was revived for Mobray's benefit, though now more often as a trio or quartette; and many other pleasures were shared in common. Both young officers were deeply concerned in the series of plays for which the theatre was being made ready; and the girls not merely heard them rehearse their respective parts, but with scissors and needles helped to make costumes for the amateur actors.

"Oh!" sighed Janice one day, after hearing Mobray through his lines in "The Deuce is in Him," "I'd give a finger but to see it played."

"See it!" exclaimed the baronet. "Of course you'll see it."

"They say there's a great demand for places," demurred Peggy.

"Have no fear as to that," said André. "Do you think I've risked my neck painting the curtain and scenery, and worked myself thin over it generally, not to get what I deserve in return. My name was next down after Sir William's for a box, and in it such beauty shall be exhibited that 't is likely we poor Thespians will get not so much as a look from the exquisites of the pit."

"Lack-a-day!" grieved Janice, "mommy will never hear of my going to see a play. I've not so much as dared to tell her that I'm helping you."

"Devil seize me, but you shall attend, if it takes a provost guard to do it," predicted Mobray.

Neither the protests nor prayers of the baronet, however, served to gain Mrs. Meredith's consent that her daughter should enter what she called "The Devil's Pit," but what he could not bring to pass the commissary did.

"I have bespoke a box for the first performance at the theatre," Lord Clowes announced at dinner one evening, "and bid ye all as my guests."

"'T is a sinful place, to which I will never lend my countenance," said Mrs. Meredith, with such promptness as to suggest a forestalling of her husband and daughter.

The commissary bowed his head in apparent acquiescence, but when he and the squire were left to their wine he recurred to the matter.

"I look to ye, Meredith," he said, "to overcome your wife's absurd whimsey."

"'T is useless to argue with Matilda when her mind's made up," answered the husband, dejectedly. "That I have learned time and again."

"And so 't is with all women, if a man's so foolish as to argue. Didst ever hear of ignorance paying heed to reason? There's but one way to deal with the sex: 'Do this, do that; ye shall, ye sha'n't,' is all the vocabulary a man needs to make matrimony agreeable. Put your foot down, and, mark me, she'll come to heel like a spaniel. But go ye must, for Sir William makes it a positive point that all of prominence attend the theatre and assembly, that the public may learn that the gentry are with us."

"They brought no clothes for such occasions," objected the squire, falling back on a new line of defence.

"Take fifty pounds more from me; 't will be money well spent."

"I like not to increase my borrowings, and especially for female fallals and furbelows."

"Nonsense, man; don't shy at a few hundred pounds. Ye



Margaret ("Peggy") Chew.

.

.

know one year of order and rents will pay all ye owe me twice over. Ye must not displease Sir William for such a sum."

So it came to pass that the squire, when they rejoined the ladies, emboldened by his wine, promptly let fall the observation that he had decided they were all to go to the theatre.

"Thou heardst me say that I am principled against it," dissented Mrs. Meredith.

"Tush, Matilda! I gave in to your Presbyterian swaddling clothes and lacing-strings at Greenwood, but now ye must do as I say. So get ye to a mercer's to-morrow, and set to on proper clothes."

"Dost wish to see thy wife and daughter damned, Lambert?"

"Ay, if that 's to be my fate, and so should ye. Go I shall to the theatre, and so shall Janice. If ye prefer salvation to our company, stay at home."

"Oh, mommy, please, please go," eagerly implored Janice. "Captain André assures me that 't is not in the least evil."

With tears in her eyes, Mrs. Meredith rose. "'T is not right; but if sin thou must, I too will eat of the fruit, rather than be parted from thee." She kissed both Mr. Meredith and Janice with an almost savage tenderness, and passed hurriedly from the room, leaving a very astounded husband and a very delighted daughter.

The girl's delight was not lessened the next day when they went a-shopping, and with the purchases a sudden end was put to her help of the theatricals, and even, temporarily, to the French and painting lessons. If ever maid was grateful for the weary hours of training in fine sewing and embroidery, Janice was, as she toiled, with cheeks made hectic by excitement, over the frock in which her waking thoughts were centred. When finally the day came for the trying on, and it fulfilled her highest expectation, her ecstasy, unable to contain itself, was forced to find expression, and she poured the rapture out in a letter to Tabitha, though knowing full well that only by the luckiest chance could it ever be sent.

"Only to think of it, Tibbie!" she wrote. "We are to have plays given by the officers, and weekly dancing assemblies, and

darling dada says I am to go to both ; and all my gowns being monstrous nugging and frumpish, he told mommy to see that I had a new one, though where the money came from (for though I did every stitch myself, it cost a pretty penny — no less than seventeen pounds and eight shillings, Tibbie !) I have puzzled not a little to fancy. I fear me I cannot describe it justly to you, but I will do my endeavour. 'Tis a black velvet, with pink satin sleeves and stomacher, and a pink satin petticoat, over which is a fall of white crape ; the sides open in front, spotted all over with gray embroidery, and the edge of the coat and skirt trimmed with gray fur. Oh, Tibbie, 'tis the most elegant and dashy robing that ever was ! Pray Heaven I don't dirt it, for it is to serve for the whole winter ! Peggy has three new frocks, and Margaret Shippen four, but mine is the prettiest, and by tight lacing (though no tighter than theirs) I make my waist an ell smaller than either. In addition, I have a nabob of gray tabby silk trimmed with the same fur, which has such a sweet and modish air that I could cry at having to remove it but for what it would conceal. I intend to ask Peggy if 't would be citified and à la mode to keep it on for a little while after entering the box by the plea that the playhouse is cold. The high mode now is to dress the hair enormous tall — a good eight inches, Tibbie — over a steel frame, powdered mighty white, and to stick a mouchet or two on the face. It seems to me I cannot wait for the night, yet my teeth rattle and my hands tremble and I am all in a shake whenever I think of it ; if I can but keep from being mute as a stock-fish, and gawkish, for I am all alive with fear that I shall be both, and shame us all ! Peggy has taught me the minuet glide and curtsy and languish, and I am to step it at the first Assembly with Captain André, — such a pretty, engaging fellow, Tibbie, who will never swing for want of tongue ; and Lord Rawdon has bespoke my hand for the quadrille, — a stern, frowning man, who frights me greatly, but 'tis a monstrous distinction I need scarce say to be asked by one who will some day be an earl, Tibbie — and I dance the Sir Roger de Coverley with Sir Frederick Mobray, who is delightful, too, by his rallying, performs most entrancingly on the flute, and is one of the best bowlers in the weekly cricket matches, but who is said to play very deep at Pharaoh in the

club the officers have established, and to keep a great number of fighting cocks on which he wagers vast sums — if rumour speaks true, as high as a hundred guineas on a single main, Tibbie — at the cock-pit they have set up. A great crowd assembled yesterday to see him and Major Tarleton ride their chargers from Sixth Street to the river on a bet, and he lost because a little girl toddled out from the sidewalk and he pulled up, while the major, who is a wonderful horseman, spurred and leaped over her. But he was blamed for taking the risk, for his horse might not have risen, so Colonel Harcourt told Nancy Bond. 'Twas Major Tarleton, I daresay you recollect, who was at our house when General Lee was captivated, and P. Hennion then told me he was considered the most reckless and dare-devil officer in the cavalry, but a cruel man. 'Mr. Lee,' as they all term him, here, — for they will not give the Whigs any titles, — has just been brought to Philadelphia and is at large on parole, pending an exchange, which has been delayed because 't is feared by the British that any convention may be taken as a recognition of the rebels, and be so considered by France and Spain.

"So much has happened," the letter-writer continued a week later, "I scarce know where to begin, Tibbie, nor how to convey to you the wondrous occurrences. Oh, Tibbie, Tibbie, plays are the most amazing and marvellous things in the world! Not a one of the officers could I recognise, so changed they were, and they did us females to the life. 'Twas so enchanting that at times I found myself gasping through very forgetfulness to breathe, and I was dreadfully rallied and quizzed because I burst into tears when the poor minor seemed to have lost both his love and his property. But how can I touch off my feelings, when, in the fourth act, the villain was detected, and all ended as it should! And, oh! Tibbie, mommy enjoyed it nearly as much as I, though the farce at the end vastly shocked her — and, indeed, Tibbie, 't was most indelicate, and made me blush a scarlet, and all the more that Sir William whispered that he enjoyed the broad parts through my cheeks — and she says if dad-da insists, we'll go again, though not to stay to the farce. We had to sit in Lord Clowes' box — which sadly affronted Captain André — and Sir William, who has hitherto kept himself much se-

cluded, made his first appearance in public, and, as you will have inferred, visited our box during a part of the performance, drawing all eyes upon us, which agitated me greatly. Dadda told him I was learning to sketch, and nothing would do but I must give him an example, so on the back of the play-bill I made a caricature of General Lee, which was extravagantly praised, and was passed from hand to hand all over the house, and excited a titter wherever it went, for the general was in attendance; but judge of my feelings, Tibbie, when an officer passed it to Lee himself! He fell into a mighty rage, and demanded aloud to know who had thus insulted him, and but for Lord Clowes and Sir William preventing me, I'd have fled from the place, I was in such a panic. Pray Heaven he never learn! I dare not repeat to thee half the civil things which were said of this 'sweet creature,' as they styled me, for fear thou'lt think me vain. 'As thee is, I doubt not,' I hear thee say. *Saucy Tibbie Drinker!*"

At the very time that this account was being penned, some twenty miles away, a man was also writing, and a paragraph in his letter read:—

"Our going into winter quarters, instead of keeping the field, can have been reprobated only by those gentlemen who think soldiers are made of stocks and stones and equally insensible to frost and snow; and, moreover, who conceived it easily practicable for an inferior army, under the disadvantages we are known to labour under, to confine a superior one, in all respects well appointed and provided for a winter's campaign, within the city of Philadelphia, and to cover from depredation and waste the States of Pennsylvania and Jersey. But what makes this matter still more extraordinary in my eye is that those very gentlemen—who well know that the path of this army from Whitmarsh to Valley Forge might have been tracked by the blood of footprints, and that not a boot or shoe had since been issued by the commissaries: who are well apprised of the nakedness of the troops from ocular demonstration; whom I myself informed of the fact that some brigades had been four days without meat, and were unsupplied with the very straw to save them from sleeping on the bare earth floors of the huts, so

On Monday,

The Twenty-sixth Instant, January, 1775

At the Theatre in Southwark,

For the Benefit of a PUBLIC CHARITY,

Will be represented a Comedy

CALLED THE

MINOR,

TO WHICH WILL BE ADDED, THE

Deuce is in him.

The CHARACTERS by the OFFICERS of the ARMY
and NAVY.

TICKETS to be had at the Printer's; at the Coffee-house in Market-
street; and at the Pennsylvania Farmer, near the New-Market, and
no where else.

BOXES and PIT, ONE DOLLAR.—GALLERY, HALF A DOLLAR.

Doors to open at Five o'Clock, and begin precisely at Seven.

No Money will, on any Account, be taken at the Door.

Gentlemen are earnestly requested not to attempt to bribe the
Door-keepers.

The Foreign Gentleman who slipped a Guinea and a Half into the
Hand of the Box-keeper, and forced his Way into the House, is de-
sired to send to the Office of the Theatre in Front-street, that it may
be returned.

XX

PHILADELPHIA: PRINTED BY JAMES HUMPHREYS, JUNR.

Bill of play given by British Officers.

that one-third of this army should be in hospitals, if hospitals there were, and that even the common soldiers had been forced to come to my quarters to make known their wants and suffering — should think a winter's campaign and the covering of these States from the invasion of an enemy so easy and practical a business. I can assure those gentlemen that it is a much easier and less distressing thing to draw remonstrances in a comfortable room by a good fireside than to keep a cold, bleak hill and sleep under frost and snow without clothes or blankets. However, although they seem to have little feeling for the naked and distressed soldiers, I feel superabundantly for them, and from my soul I pity those miseries which it is neither in my power to relieve nor prevent.

"It is for these reasons that I dwell upon the subject to Congress; and it adds not a little to my other difficulties and distress to find that much more is expected of me than it is possible to perform, the more that upon the ground of safety and policy I am obliged to conceal the true state of this army from public view, and thereby expose myself to detraction and calumny."

The letter completed, the man took up the tallow dip, and passed from the cramped, chilly room in which he had sat to a still more cold and contracted hallway. Tiptoeing up a stairway, he paused a moment to listen at a door, then entered.

"I heard your voice, Brereton, so knew you were waking. Well, Billy, how does the patient?"

"Pohly, massa, pohly. De doctor say de ku'nel 'ud do fus-class ef he only would n't wherrit so, but he do nothin' but toss an' act rambunctious, an' dat keep de wound fretted an' him feverish."

"And fret I will," came a voice from the bed, "till I've done with this feather-bed coddling and am allowed to take my share of the work and privation."

"Nay, my boy," said Washington, coming to the bedside and laying his hand kindly on Jack's shoulder; "there is naught to be done, and you are well out of it. Give the wound its chance to heal."

Brereton gave a flounce. "Do, in the name of mercy, Billy,

get me a glass of water," he begged querulously. Then, after the black had departed, he asked: "What has Congress done?"

"They have voted Gates president of the Board of War, with almost plenary powers."

"A fit reward for his holding back until too late the troops that would have put us, and not the British, in Philadelphia this winter. You won't let their ill-treatment force you into a resignation, sir?"

"I have put my hand to the plough and shall ne'er turn back. If I leave the cause, it will be by their act and not mine."

"Congress may hamper and slight you, sir, but will not dare to supersede you, for very fear of their own constituents. The people trust you, if the politicians don't."

"Set your mind on more quieting things, Brereton," advised Washington, taking the young fellow's hand affectionately. "May you have a restful night."

"One favour before you go, your Excellency," exclaimed Jack, as the general turned. "I — Could n't — Does McLane still get his spies into the city?"

"Almost daily."

"Could he — Wilt ask him — to — to make inquiry — if possible — of one — concerning Miss Janice Meredith, and let me know how she fares?"

The general pressed the aide's hand, and was opening his lips, when a figure, covered by a *négligée* night-gown of green silk, appeared at the door.

"I've heard thee exciting John for the last half-hour, Mr. Washington," she said upbraidingly. "I am amazed at thy thoughtlessness."

"Nay, Patsy, I but stopped in to ask how he did and to bid him a good-night," replied Washington, gently.

"A half-hour," reiterated Mrs. Washington, sternly, "and now you still tarry."

"Only because you block the doorway, my dear," said the husband, equably. "If I delayed at all, 't was because Brereton wished to set in train an inquiry concerning his sweetheart."



Washington's Headquarters at Valley Forge.

"His what?" exclaimed the dame. "Let me pass in, Mr. Washington. John must tell me all about her this moment."

"You said he should sleep, Patsy," replied the general, smiling. "Come to our room, my dear, and I'll tell you somewhat of her."

But however much may have been told in the privacy of the connubial chamber, one fact was not stated: That far back in the bottom drawer of the bureau in which Janice kept her clothes lay a half-finished silk purse, to which not a stitch had been added since the day that the muttering of the guns of Brandywine had sounded through the streets of Philadelphia.



XLII

BARTER AND SALE

THE first check to Janice's full enjoyment of the novel and delightful world into which she had plunged so eagerly came early in March.

"I have ill news for thee, my child," Mr. Meredith apprised her, as he entered the room where she was sitting. "I just parted from Mr. Loring, the Commissary of Prisoners, and he asked if Philemon Hennion were not a friend of ours, and then told me that the deputy-commissary at Morristown writ him last week that the lad had died of the putrid fever."

"I am very sorry," the girl said, with a genuine regret in her voice. "He—I wish—I can't but feel that 't is something for which I am to blame."

"Nay, don't lay reproach on yeself, Jan," advised the father, little recking of what was in his daughter's mind. "If we go to blaming ourselves for the results of well-considered conduct, there is no end to sorrow. But I fear me his death will bring us a fresh difficulty. We 'll say nothing of the news to Lord Clowes, and trust that he hear not of it; for once known, he 'll probably begin teasing us to let him wed ye."

"Dadda!" cried Janice, "you never would—would give him encouragement? Oh, no, you—you love me too much."

"Ye know I love ye, Jan, and that whatever I do, I try to do my best for ye. But—"

"Then don't give him any hope. Oh, dadda, if you knew how I—"

"He's not the man I'd pick for ye, Jan, that I grant. Clowes is—"

"He beguiled me shamefully—and he broke his parole—and he takes mean advantage whene'er he can—and he crawls half the time and bullies the rest—and when he's



“Janice enjoyed the novel and delightful world into which she had been plunged.”

polite he makes me shudder or grow cold — and when he 's — ”

“ Now, don't fly into a flounce or a ferment till ye 've listened to what I have to say, child. 'T is — ”

“ Oh, dadda, no ! Don't — ”

“ Hark to me, Janice, and then ye shall have all the speech ye wish. By this time, lass, ye are old enough to know that life is not made up of doing what one wishes, but doing what one can or must. The future for us is far blacker than I have chosen to paint to ye. Many of the British officers themselves now concede that the subduing of the rebels will be a matter of years, and that ere it is accomplished, the English people may tire of it ; and though I 'll ne'er believe that our good king will abandon to the rule and vengeance of the Whigs those who have remained loyal to him, yet the outlook for the moment is darkened by the probability that France will come to the assistance of the rebels. The Pennsylvania Assembly has before it an act of attainder and forfeiture which will drive from the colony all those who have held by the king, and take from them their lands ; and as soon as the Jersey Assembly meets, it will no doubt do the same, and vote us into exile and poverty. Even if my having taken no active part should save me from this fate, the future is scarce bettered, for 't will take years for the country to recover from this war, and rents will remain unpaid. Nor is this the depth of our difficulties. Already I am a debtor to the tune of nigh four hundred pounds to Lord Clowes — ”

“ Dadda, no ! ” cried the girl. “ Don't say it ! ”

“ Ay. Where didst thou suppose the money came from on which I lived in New York and all of us here ? Didst think thy gown came from heaven ? ”

“ I 'd have died sooner than owe it to him,” moaned Janice. “ How could you let me go to the expense ? ”

“ 'T was not to be avoided, Jan. As Sir William's wish was that we should lend our countenance to the festivities, 't would not have done to displease him, and since I was to be debtor to Lord Clowes, another fifty pounds was not worth balking at. More still I 'll have to ask from him, I fear, ere we are safe out of this wretched coil.”

"Oh, prithee, dadda," implored the girl, "do not take another shilling. I'll work my fingers to the bone — do anything — rather than be indebted to him!"

"'Tis not to be helped, child. Think ye work is to be obtained at such a time, with hundreds in the city out of employment and at the point of starvation? Thank your stars, rather, that we have a friend who not merely gives us a shelter and food, but advances us cash enough to make us easy. Dost think I have not tried for employment myself? I've been to merchant after merchant to beg even smouting work, and done the same to the quartermaster's and commissary's departments, but nothing wage-earning is to be had."

"'T is horrible!" despairingly wailed Janice.

"That it might be blacker can at least be said, and that is why I wish thee not to let thy feelings set too strongly against Lord Clowes. Here's a peer of England, Jan, with wealth as well, eager to wed thee. He is not what I would have him, but it would be a load off my mind and off thy mother's to feel that thy future at least is made safe and —"

"I'd die sooner than live such a future," cried the girl. "I could not live with him!"

"Yet ye ran off with this man."

"But then I did not know him as I know him now. You won't force me, will you, dadda?"

"That I'll not; but act not impulsively, lass. Talk with thy mother, and view it from all sides. And meantime, we'll hope he'll not hear of the poor lad's death."

Left alone by her father to digest this advice, Janice lapsed into a despondent attitude, while remarking: "'T is horrible, and never could I bring myself to it. Starvation would be easier." She sat a little time pondering; then, getting her cloak, calash, and pattens, she set forth, the look of thought displaced by one of determination. A hurried walk of a few squares brought her to the Franklin house, where she asked for André.

"Miss Meredith," cried the captain, as he appeared at the door, "this is indeed an honour! But why tarry you outside?"

"I fear me, Captain André, that I am doing a monstrous

bold thing, and therefore will not enter, but beg of you instead that you walk with me a little distance, for I am in a real difficulty and would ask your help."

The officer caught up his hat and sword, and in a moment they were walking down Second Street. Several times Janice unsuccessfully sought to begin her tale, but André finally had to come to her assistance.

"You surely do not fear to trust me, Miss Meredith, and you cannot doubt the surety of assistance, if it be within my power?"

For a moment the girl's lips trembled; then she said, "Dost truly think the miniature frame I showed thee is worth as much as five hundred pounds?"

"I think 't is, beyond doubt."

"And dost thou think that thee couldst obtain four hundred pounds for it?"

"Of that I can scarce give assurance, for 't is a question whether a purchaser can be found for it. Yet I make small doubt, Miss Meredith," he added, "that if you will leave your portrait in it, one man there is in Philadelphia will gladly buy it at that price, though he run in debt to do it. If you desire to sell it, why do you not offer it to Mobray?"

The girl had coloured with André's first remark, and ere he had completed his speech, her cheeks were all aglow. "I—I could not offer it to him. Surely you can understand that 't would be impossible?" she stammered.

"I suppose I am dull-witted not to know it," said André, hurriedly, in evident desire to lessen her embarrassment. "However, 't was but a suggestion, and if you desire to sell, I will gladly undertake to negotiate it for you."

"Oh, will you?" cried the girl, eagerly. "'T will so greatly service me."

Without more ado, she held out her hand, which contained the miniature, and after a second outburst of thanks, quite unconscious of the fact that she was leaving him abruptly, she hurried away, not homeward, but in a direction which presently brought her to a house before which a sentry paced, where she stopped.

"Is Sir William within?" she asked of the uniformed

servant who answered her knock ; and when told that he was, added : " Wilt say that Miss Meredith begs speech with him ? "

The servant showed her into the parlour, then passed into the room back of it, and Janice heard the murmur of his words as he delivered her message.

" Miss Meredith," cried a woman's voice. " What does that puss want with you, Sir William ? "

The bass of a masculine reply came to the visitor's ears, though pitched too low for her to distinguish words.

" I know better than to take any man's oath concerning that," retorted the feminine speaker ; and on the last word the door was flung wider open, and a woman of full figure and of very pronounced beauty burst into the room where the girl sat, closely followed, if not in fact pursued, by the British commander-in-chief. " What do you want with Sir William ? " she demanded.

Janice had risen, half in fright and half in courtesy ; but the cry she uttered, even as the inquiry was put, was significant of something more than either.

" Well," went on the questioner, " art struck with a syncope that thou dost nothing but gape and stare at me ? "

" I beg your pardon," faltered the girl. " I recognised — that is — I mean, 't was thy painting that — "

" Malapert ! " shrieked the woman. " How dare you say I paint ! Dost have the vanity to think thou 'rt the only one with a red and white skin ? "

" Oh, indeed, madam," gasped Janice, " I alluded not to thy painting and powdering, but to the miniature that — "

" Sir William," screamed the dame, too furious even to heed the attempted explanation, " how can you stand there and hear this hussy thus insult me ? "

" Then in Heaven's name get back to the room from which you should ne'er have come," muttered Howe, crossly.

" And leave you to the *tit-à-tit* you wish with this bold minx."

" Ay, leave me to learn why Miss Meredith honours me with this visit."

" You need not my absence, if that is all you wish to know. 'T would be highly wrong to leave a miss, however artful,

unmatronised. Here I stay till I see cause to change my mind."

Sir William said something below his breath with a manner suggestive of an oath, shrugged his shoulders, and turned to Janice. "Old friends are not to be controlled, Miss Meredith," he said, "and since we are to have a third for our interview, let me make you known to each other. Mrs. Loring, Miss Meredith."

"I pray you, madam, to believe," entreated Janice, even as she made her curtsy, "that you entirely misinterpreted —"

"I care not what you meant," broke in Mrs. Loring, without the pretence of returning the obeisance. "Say your say to Sir William, and be gone."

"Damn you, Jane!" swore the general, bursting into a rage. "If you cannot behave yourself I will call in the servants and have you put from the room. Please be seated, Miss Meredith, and tell me in what manner I can serve you."

"I came, Sir William, to beg that you would give my father some position by which he could earn a living. We are totally without money, and getting daily deeper in debt."

"Your wish is a command," replied Sir William, gallantly, "but are you sure 't is best? Remember that the moment your father takes position from me he commits himself far more in the cause than he has hitherto, and the rebels are making it plain they intend to punish with the utmost severity all who take sides with us."

"But even that is better than — than — than living on charity," exclaimed Janice. "I assure you that anything is better —"

"Enough!" declared the general, as the girl hesitated. "Your father shall be gazetted one of the wardens of abandoned property at once. 'T will give him a salary and fees as well."

"Ah, Sir William, how can I ever thank you enough?" murmured the girl, feeling, indeed, as if an end had come to her troubles. She made a deep curtsy to Mrs. Loring, a second to the general, and then took the hand he offered her to the front door. "I beg, Sir William," she said at parting, "that you will assure Mrs. Loring that I really did not —"

The general interrupted her with a laugh. "A man with

an evil smell takes offence at every wrinkled nose," he asserted, "and you hit upon a subject on which my friend has perhaps cause to be sensitive."

Janice ran rather than walked the whole way home, and, not stopping when she reached the house to tell her father of her successful mission, or even to remove her cloak and calash, she tripped upstairs to her room, went straight to her bureau, and, pulling open the bottom drawer, took from it the unset miniature, and scrutinised it closely for a moment. "T is she beyond question!" the girl ejaculated. "And I always thought of her as a young female, never suspecting it might have been some time painted. Why, she is a good ten years older than Colonel Brereton, or at least eight, let alone that she paints and powders! If that is the ill-mannered creature he gave his love to, I have little pity for him."

This decided, the maiden sought out her father and informed him of her mission and its successful result.

"Why, Jan," exclaimed her father, "thou'rt indeed a wonderful lass to have schemed and carried it through. I'd have spoken to Sir William myself, but he keeps himself so secluded that never a chance have I had to speak to him save in public. It is for the best, however, for I doubt not he paid more heed to thy young lips than ever he would to mine. Hadst thou told me, however, I would have gone with thee, for it must have been a tax on thy courage to have ventured alone."

"I did n't even let myself think of it," replied the daughter, "and, indeed, 't was so much easier than the thought of your further increasing your debt to Lord Clowes that 't was nothing." Then, after a slight pause, she asked: "Dadda, who is the Mrs. Loring I found at Sir William's?"

"Humph!" grunted the squire, with obvious annoyance. "T is the wife of Joshua Loring, commissary of prisoners."

"Has she been long married to him?" asked Janice.

"That I know not; and the less ye concern yourself, Jan, with her, the better."

Despite this recommendation, Janice once again repeated her question, this time making it to André at the Assembly that evening.

"I know not," the captain told her, pursing up his lips and raising his eyebrows. Then he called to his opposite in the quadrille: "Cathcart, can you tell me how long Mrs. Loring has rejoiced in that title of honour?"

The earl laughed as if André had said something witty, and made reply: "Since ever I can remember, and that is a full five years."

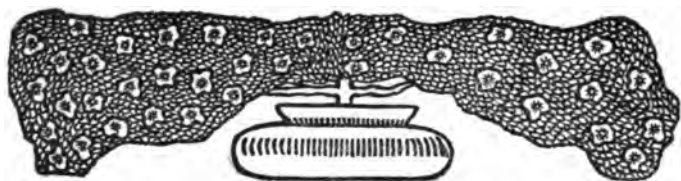
When later the dancers adjourned to the supper-room, Lord Cathcart tossed a billet across the table to André, and he in turn passed it to Mobray, who was squiring Janice. The baronet held it so that she could see the message as well, and inscribed on the paper were the lines: —

"Your question don't think me a moment ignoring:
'How long has she *honoured* the surname of Loring?'
Wiseacre, first tell, how a man without *honour*
Could ever confer that fair jewel upon her?"

Sir Frederick, before handing it back, took Janice's pencil from her dancing-card, and scribbled on the back of the quip: —

"The answer is plain, for by means of her face,
The lady secured him an *honourable* place.
In return for the favour, by clergy and vow,
She made sure of her *honour*, but who knows when or *Howe*?"

And from that interchange of epigrams Janice asked no further questions relative to Mrs. Loring, unless it might be of herself.



XLIII

A CHOICE OF EVILS

AT this ball Janice was gladdened by word from André that he had effected the sale of the miniature, though he maintained absolute silence as to who the purchaser was, nor did she choose to inquire. The next morning brought a packet from him containing a rouleau of guineas, and so soon as they were counted, the girl hurried to the room on the ground floor which the commissary had taken as a half office, and, after an apology for the unannounced intrusion, said, —

"You have been good enough, Lord Clowes, to favour us with sundry loans, for which we can never be grateful enough, but 't is now in our power to repay them."

"Pay me!" cried the baron, incredulously.

"Yes," replied Janice, laying down the pile of gold on the desk. "Wilt tell me the exact amount?"

The guineas were too indisputable for Clowes to question the girl's ability to carry out her intention, but he demanded, "How came you by such a sum of gold?"

"'T is — That concerns thee not," replied the girl, with spirit.

"And does thy father know?"

"I ask you, Lord Clowes," Janice responded, "to tell me the amount we owe you."

For a moment the officer sat with a scowl on his face, then suddenly he threw it off, and with a hearty, friendly manner said: "Nay, Miss Meredith, think naught of it. You're welcome ten times over to the money, and what more ye shall ever need." He rose as he spoke, and held out his hand toward the girl. "Generosity is not the monopoly of razorless youngsters of twenty."

Janice, ignoring the hand, said: "Once again, Lord Clowes, I ask you to inform me of the amount of our debt, which if you will not tell me, you will force me to leave all the money."

The angry frown returned to the commissary's face, and all the reply he made was to touch a bell. "Tell Mr. Meredith I would have word with him in my office," he said to the servant. Then he turned to Janice and remarked, "If ye insist on knowing the amount, 't is as well that your father give it to ye, since clearly ye trust me in nothing."

"Oh, Lord Clowes," begged Janice, "wilt thou not let me pay this without calling in dad-da? I — I acted without first speaking to him, and I fear me — " There her words were cut short by the entrance of the squire.

"I sent for ye, man, to help us unsnarl a coil. Your daughter insists on repaying the money I have loaned ye, and I thought it best ye should be witness to the transaction." As he ended he pointed to the pile of coin.

"Odds bodikins!" exclaimed Mr. Meredith, as his eye followed the motion. "And where got ye such a sum, Jan?"

"Oh, dad-da," faltered the girl, "'t is a long story, of which I promise to make you a full narration, once we are alone, though I fear me you will think that I have done wrong. But, meantime, will you not tell me how much you owe Lord Clowes, and let me pay him? Believe me, the money is honestly come by."

"No doubt, no doubt," said the commissary, with a rough laugh. "Young macaronis are oft known to give girls hundreds of pounds and get nothing in return."

All the reply Janice made was to go to the door. "Whenever you will come to the parlour, dad-da, you shall know all, but I will not stay here to endure such speeches."

Without thought of the gold, Mr. Meredith was hurrying after his daughter, when Clowes interrupted him.

"The explanation is simple enough, Meredith," he said, "and I cannot but take it in bad part that your maid should borrow of Mobray in order to repay my loan to you."

"I cannot believe that that is the explanation, Clowes,"

protested Mr. Meredith. "But if it is, be assured that the money shall be returned him, and we will still stand your debtors." Then he sought his daughter, and she poured out to him the whole story of the miniature.

"Wrong I may have been, dad, to have taken it to begin with, but Colonel Brereton refused to receive it from me, and when he himself placed it about my picture, I could not but feel that it had truly become mine, and that I could dispose of it."

"But who bought it of ye, Jan?" inquired the parent.

"That I know not," said the girl, though hesitating and colouring at the question in her own mind whether she were not prevaricating, for André's face and her own suspicions had really convinced her who was the nameless buyer. "Captain André assured me that the frame was fully worth five hundred pounds."

"That I will not gainsay, lass," replied the squire, "and the only blame I will lay on ye is that ye did not consult me before acting, for I could have negotiated it as well, and should have so managed as not to have offended Clowes. However, I make no doubt he'll not hold rancour when he knows that the money came by the sale of a piece of jewelry, and was not merely borrowed. Did ye take your picture from the frame?"

"No, dad. I did so once before, only to bring suspicion on myself; so this time I let it remain."

"Ye might as well have removed it," said Mr. Meredith, "for it could have added no money value to it." Yet the squire had once been a lover, and should have known otherwise. This said, he returned to Clowes, and sought to mollify him by a statement of how the money had been obtained.

"Humph!" grunted the baron. "She'd better have brought the trinket to me, for I'd gladly have been the purchaser, for more even than she got by it."

"I told the lass she should have left the sale of it to me," answered the squire, "but ye know what women are."

"Egad, I sometimes think, shallow as the sex is, no man fully knows that. However, we will waste no further parley on the matter. Put the money in your purse, man, for your future needs, and think naught about the debt to me."

"Nay, Clowes. Since the money is here, 't is as well to pay up." And protest and argue as the commissary would, nothing would do the squire but to count out the amount on the spot from the heap of guineas, and to pocket, not without some satisfaction, the small surplus that remained. Then he left the room in great good cheer ; but for some time after he was gone, the baron, leaving the gold piled on the table, paced the room in an evident fit of temper, while muttering to himself and occasionally shaking his head threateningly.

The gazettement of Mr. Meredith served only to increase this half-stifed anger, and on the very evening his appointment was announced in the "Pennsylvania Ledger," the commissary recurred to his proposal.

"I heard by chance to-day that young Hennion had fallen a victim to the camp fever," he told the squire, "and only held my tongue before the ladies through not wishing to be the reporter of bad tidings — though, as I understood it, neither Mrs. Meredith nor Miss Janice really wished the match."

The father took time over a swallow of Madeira, then said : " 'T is a grievous end for the good lad."

"Ay, though I am not hypocrite enough to pretend that it affects me save for its freeing of your daughter, and so removing the one objection ye made to my taking her to wife."

Once more the squire gained a moment's breathing space over his wine before he replied : "Ye know, Clowes, that I'd willingly give ye the girl, but I find that she will have none of it, and 't is a matter on which I choose not to force her inclination."

"Well said ; and I am the last man to wish an unwilling spouse," responded the aspirant. "But ye know women's ways enough not to be their dupes. In truth, having no stability of mind, the sex resemble a ship without a rudder, veering with every shift of the wind, and never sailing two days alike. But put a man at the helm, and they steer as straight a course as could be wished. Janice was hot to wed me once, and though she took affront later because she held me responsible for her punishment, yet she herself owned, but a few weeks

ago, that she was still bound to me, which shows how little her moods mean. Having your consent secured, it will take me but a brief wooing to gain hers, that ye shall see."

"Well," rejoined Mr. Meredith, "she's now old enough to know her own mind, and if ye can win her assent to your suit, mine shall not be lacking. But 't is for ye to do that."

"Spoken like a true friend, and here's my hand on it," declared the commissary. "But there is one matter in which I wish ye to put an interfering finger, not so much to aid me as to save the maid from hazard. That fopling Mobray is buzzing about her and pilfering all the sweets that can be had short of matrimony —"

"Nay, Clowes, he's no intriguer against my lass, that I am bound to say. 'Twas only this morning, the moment he had news of Hennion's death, he came to me like a man, to ask permission to address her."

"Ho, he's deeper bitten by her charms than I thought!" retorted the suitor. "Or, on second thought, more like 't is a last desperate leap to save himself from ruin. Let me warn ye that he has enough paper out to beggar him thrice over, and 't is only a question of time ere his creditors come down on him and force him to sell his commission; after which he must sink into beggary."

"I sorrow to hear it. He's a likely lad, and has kindly stood us in stead more than once."

"And just because of his taking parts, he is likely to keep your girl's heart in a state of incertitude, for 't is only mortal for eighteen to fancy twenty more than forty-four. Therefore, unless ye want a gambling bankrupt for a son-in-law, give him his marching orders."

"I'll not do that after his kindness to my wife and child; but I'll take good care to warn Janice."

"Look that ye don't only make him the more interesting to her. Girls of her age think little of where the next meal is to come from, and dote on the young prodigal."

"Have no fear on that score," replied the father.

On the morning following this conversation Janice was stopped by the commissary as she was passing his office. "Will ye give me the honour of your presence within for a

moment?" he requested. "I have something of import to say to ye."

With a little trepidation the girl entered, and took the seat he placed for her.

Taking a standing position at a respectful distance, Lord Clowes without circumlocution plunged at once into the object of the interview. "That I have long wished ye for my wife, Miss Meredith," he said with frank bluntness, "is scarce worth repeating. That in one or two instances I have given ye cause to blame or doubt me, I am full conscious; 't is not in man, I fear, to love such beauty, grace, and elegance, and keep his blood ever within bounds. 'T was this led me to suggest our elopement, and to my effort to bind ye to the troth.. In both of these I erred, and now crave a pardon. Ye can scarce hold me guilty that my love made me hot for the quickest marriage I could compass, or that, believing ye in honour pledged to me, I should seek to assure myself of the plight from your own lips, ungenerous though it was at the moment. It has since been my endeavour to show that I regretted my impulsive persecution, and I trust that my long forbearance and self-effacement have proved to ye that your comfort and happiness are the first object of my heart."

"You have been very good to us all," answered Janice, "and I would that I were able to repay in full measure all we owe to you. But —"

"Ye can, and by one word," interjected the suitor.

"But, Lord Clowes," she continued, with a voice that trembled a little, "I cannot yield to thy wish. Censurable I know myself to be — and no one can upbraid me more than I upbraid myself — yet between the two wrongs I must choose, and 't is better for both of us that I break the implied promise, entered into at a moment when I was scarce myself, than to make a new one which I know to be false from the beginning, and impossible to fulfil."

"Of the old promise we will say naught, Miss Meredith," replied the baron. "If your sense of right and wrong absolve ye, Baron Clowes is not the man to insist upon it. But there is still a future that ye must not overlook. 'T will be years, if ever, ere ye once again enjoy your property, and though

this appointment—which is like to prove dear-bought—for the moment enables ye to face the world, it is but a short-lived dependence. To ye I will confide what is as yet known to but a half-dozen: his Majesty has accepted Sir William's resignation, and he leaves us so soon as Sir Henry Clinton arrives. The new commander will have his own set of hungry hangers-on to provide with places, and your father's days will be numbered. In my own help I shall be as unstinting as in the past, but it is quite on the cards that I, too, lose my appointment, in which case I shall return to England. Would not a marriage with me make —"

"But I love you not," broke in Janice.

"Ye have fallen in love with that —"

"I love no one, Lord Clowes; and indeed begin to fear that I was born without a heart."

"Then your objection is that of a very young girl who knows nothing of the world. Miss Meredith, the women who marry for love are rare indeed, and but few of them fail of a bitter disappointment. I cannot hope that my arguments will convince ye of this, but counsel with your parents, and ye 'll find they bear me out. On the one side stands eventual penury and perhaps violence for ye all; on the other, marriage with a man who, whatever his faults, loves ye hotly, who will give ye a title and wealth, and who will see to it that your parents want for nothing. 'Tis an alternative that few women would hesitate over, but I ask no answer now, and would rather that ye give none till ye have taken consideration upon it."

Janice rose. "I—I will talk with dad-da and mom-my," she said, "and learn their wishes." But even as she spoke the words a slight shiver unsteadied her voice.



XLIV

A CARTEL OF EXCHANGE

AFTER Janice left him the commissary-general mounted a horse, and, riding to the Franklin house, asked for Captain Mobray.

"I have called, sir," he announced, as the baronet entered the room, "on two matters —"

"Have they to do with the service, my Lord?" interrupted Mobray; "for otherwise I must decline —"

"First," the caller went on unheedingly, "a number of past-due bills of yours have come into my possession in exchange for special victuals or stores, and I wish to learn your intention concerning them."

"I — In truth — I —" haltingly began Sir Frederick, his face losing colour as he spoke. "I have had the devil's turn of luck of late, and — and I am not in a position to take them up at the moment. I trust that you'll give me time, and not press me too harshly."

With a smile that expressed irony qualified by enjoyment, the creditor replied: "'T is a pleasure to aid a man to whom I am indebted for so much courtesy."

Sir Frederick's ashen hue changed to a ruddy one, as he said: "Lord Clowes, 't is a bitter mouthful for a man to eat, but I ask your clemency till my luck changes, for change it must, since cards and dice cannot always run against one. I know I deserve it not at your hands, after what has passed —"

"Cease your stuttering, man," ordered the commissary. "Had I revenge in my heart I'd have sent the bailiff, not come myself. The bills shall wait your convenience, and all I ask for the lenience is that ye dine with me and do me one service. Ye did me a bad stroke with Miss Meredith; now

I ask ye to offset it by telling her what my vengeance has been."

Mobray hesitated. "Lord Clowes, I will do nothing to trick Miss Meredith, desperately placed as I am."

"Chut! Who talks of trickery? Ye told her the facts of my parole; therefore ye owe it to me, even though it may not serve your own suit, to tell her as well what is in my favour."

"And so help you to win her. I cannot do her that wrong, my Lord."

"Is it worse to tell her only the truth about me than to seek to persuade her into a marriage with a bankrupt?"

"You state it unsparingly."

"Not more so, I doubt not, than ye did the matter of my parole — which some day I shall be able to justify, and the gentlemen of the army will then sing a very altered tune — with this difference, that I say it to your face and ye did not."

With bowed head Sir Frederick answered: "You are right, my Lord, and I will say what I can in your favour to Miss Meredith."

"Spoke like an honest man. Fare ye well till next Wednesday, when I shall look for ye to a three-o'clock dinner."

Whatever pain and shame the words cost him, honourably the baronet fulfilled his promise by going to the commissary's quarters the following day and telling Janice the facts. The girl listened to his explanation with a face grave almost to sadness. "I — What you have told me, Sir Frederick," she said gently at the end, "is of much importance to me just at this time, and I thank you."

"I know, I know," groaned the young officer, miserably, "and 't is only part of my horrible run of luck that I should — that — ah — Take him, Miss Meredith, and end my torture."

"Can you advise me to marry Lord Clowes?"

"After his generosity to me, 'in honour I must say nothing against him, but 't is asking too much of human nature for me to aid his suit."

"I — oh, I know not what to do!" despairingly wailed the girl. "Mommy says 't is for me to decide, and dadda thinks

I cannot do better, and to the ear it seems indeed the only thing to do. Yet I shudder every time I think of it, and twice, when I have dreamed that I was his wife, I have waked the whole house with my screams to be saved from him."

"Miss Meredith," burst out the baronet, "give me the right to save you. You know I love you to desperation; that I would live to make you —"

"Ah, pray, Sir Frederick," begged Janice, "do not add to my pain and difficulty. What you wish —"

"I crave a pardon for my words. 'T was a moment's selfish forgetfulness of you and of my own position, that shall not occur again." Mobray stooped and kissed a loose end of the handkerchief the girl held, and hurried from the room.

As he was catching up his cloak and sabre in the hallway, the door of the office opened. "Come in here a moment, Sir Frederick," requested the commissary.

"I have done as I promised, and that is all I can do at the moment," almost sobbed the young fellow. "Nor will I dine here Wednesday, though you do your worst."

"Tush! Do as ye please as to that, but come in here now, for I have a thing to say that concerns Miss Meredith's happiness."

"And what is that?" demanded the baronet, as he entered.

"I see by the G. O. that ye are named one of the commissioners to arrange a cartel of exchange with the rebels at Germantown to-day."

"Would to God it were to arrange a battle in which I might fall!"

"'T is likely lists of prisoners will be shown, and should ye chance to see the name of Leftenant Hennion on any of those handed in by the rebels I recommend that ye do not advertise the fact when ye return to Philadelphia."

"But the fellow's dead."

"Ye have been long enough in the service to know that some die whose names never get on any return, and so some are reported dead who decline to be buried. Let us not beat about the bush as to what I mean. We are each doing our best to obtain possession of this lovely creature, but the father

holds to his promise to the long-legged noodle, and, if he is alive, our suits are hopeless. So let them continue to suppose him — ”

“ Mine is so already,” groaned Mobray. “ But if ’t were not, I would not filch a woman’s love by means of a deceit. Nor — ”

“ Fudge ! Hear me through. The girl has always hated the match, which was one of her old fool of a father’s conceiving, and will thank any one who saves her from the fellow. Let her say nay to us both, and it please her, but don’t force her to a marriage of compulsion by needless blabbing.”

“ I will hold my peace, if that seems best for Miss Meredith ; not otherwise, my Lord,” answered Mobray, flinging from the room.

The baronet mounted his horse, and, stabbing his spurs into him, galloped madly down Market Street, and then up Second Street to where it forked into two country roads. Here the lines of British fortifications intersected it, and a picket of cavalry forced the rider to draw rein and show his pass. This done, he rode on, though at a more easy pace, and an hour later entered the village of Germantown. In front of the Roebuck Inn a guidon, from which depended a white flag, had been thrust into the ground, and grouped about the door of the tavern was a small party of Continental light horse. Trotting up to them, Mobray dismounted, and, after an inquiry and a request to one of them to take his horse, he entered the public room. To its one occupant, who was seated before the fire, he said : “ The dragoons outside told me the reb — the Continental commissioners were here. Canst tell me where they are to be found, fellow ? ”

The person addressed rose from his seat, revealing clothes so soiled and tattered, and a pair of long boots of such shabby appearance, as to give him the semblance of some runaway prentice or bond-servant, but over his shoulder passed a green ribbon and sword sash which marked their wearer as a field officer ; and as the baronet realised this he removed his hat and bowed.

“ Since when did you take to calling your superior officers ‘ fellows,’ Sir Frederick ? ” asked the other, laughing.

With a cry of recognition, Mobray sprang forward, his hand outstretched. "Charlie!" he exclaimed. "Heavens, man, we have made a joke in the army of the appearance of thy troops, but I never thought to see the exquisite of the Mall in clothes not fit for a tinker."

"My name, Fred, is John Brereton," corrected the officer, "which is a change for the better, I think you will own. As for my clothes, I'll better them, too, if Congress ever gives us enough pay to do more than keep life in us. Owing to depreciation, a lieutenant-colonel is allowed to starve at present on the equivalent of twenty-five dollars, specie, a month."

"And yet you go on serving such masters," burst out Mobray. "Come over to us, Charl — John. Sir William would give you —"

"Enough," interrupted Brereton, angrily. "For how long, Sir Frederick, have you deemed me capable of treachery?"

"'Tis no treachery to leave this unnatural rebellion and take sides with our good king."

"Such talk is idle, and you should know it, Mobray. A word with you ere Grayson and Boudinot — who have gone to look at that marplot house of Cliveden which frustrated all our hopes four months since — return and interrupt us. I last saw you at the Merediths'; can you give me word of them?"

"Only ill ones, alas!" answered the captain. "Their necessities are such that I fear me they are on the point of giving their daughter to that unutterable scoundrel, Clowes."

Jack started as if he had been stung. "You cannot mean that, man! We sent you word he had broke his parole."

"Ay," replied the baronet, flushing. "And let me tell you, John, that scarce an officer failed to go to Sir William and beg him to send the cur back to you."

"And you mean that Mr. Meredith can seriously intend to give Miss Janice to such a creature?"

"I fear 'tis as good as decided. You know the man, and how he gets his way, curse him!"

"I'd do more than that, could I but get into Philadelphia," declared Jack, hotly. "By heavens, Fred —"

But here the entrance of other officers interrupted them,

and Colonel Brereton was set to introducing Boudinot and Grayson to the British officer.

Scarcely had they been made known to each other when Mobray's fellow-commissioners, Colonel O'Hara and Colonel Stevens, with a detail of dragoons, came trotting up; and so soon as credentials were exchanged the six sat down about a table in a private room to discuss the matter which had brought them together. One of the first acts of Mobray was to ask for a look at the Continental lists of prisoners; and after a hurried glance through them, he turned and said to Brereton in a low voice: "We had word in Philadelphia that Lieutenant Hennion died of a fever."

"'T is a false rumour," replied Brereton. "If I could I'd see that he failed of an exchange till the end of the war; and I would that one of our officers in your hands could be kept by you for an equal term."

"Who is that?" asked Mobray.

"That rascal, Charles Lee," muttered Brereton. "But, though he openly schemed against General Washington, and sought to supersede him, his Excellency is above resentment, and has instructed us to obtain his exchange among the first."

In the arrangement of details of the cartel Brereton showed himself curiously variable, at times sitting completely abstracted from what was being discussed, and then suddenly entering into the discussions, only to compel an entire going over of points already deemed settled, and raising difficulties which involved much waste of time.

"Confound it!" said O'Hara presently, after a glance at his watch. "At this rate we shall have to take a second day to it."

"Beyond question," assented Jack, with a suggestion of eagerness. "Gentlemen, I invite you to dinner, and there are good sleeping-rooms above."

"'T is out of the question," replied Stevens. "We officers give a masked ball in the city to-night, and I am one of the managers."

"Well, then," urged Brereton, "at least stay and dine with me at three, and you shall be free to leave by six. 'T is not much over an hour's ride to the city."

"That we'll do with pleasure," assented O'Hara.

"Go on with the discussion, then, while I speak to the landlord," remarked Jack, rising and passing to the kitchen. "We wish a dinner for six," he informed the publican, "by three o'clock." Then in a low voice he continued: "And hark you! One thing I wish done that is peculiar. Give us such whiskey as we call for of thy best, with lemons and sugar, but in place of hot water in the kettle, see to it that as often as it is replenished, it be filled with thy newest and palest rum. Understand?"

"Jerusalem!" ejaculated mine host. "You gentlemen of the army must have swingeing strong heads to dilute whiskey with raw rum."

"I trust not," replied the aide, drily.

When dinner was announced Brereton drew Grayson aside for a moment and whispered: "'T is a matter of life and death to me that these fellows be made too drunk to ride, Will, yet to keep sober myself. You've got the head and stomach of a ditcher; wilt make a sacrifice of yourself for my sake?"

"And but deem it sport," replied Grayson, with a laugh; and as he took his place at the table he remarked: "Gentlemen, we have tested British valour, we have tested British courtesy, and found them not wanting, but we understand that, though you turn not your backs to either our soldiery or our ladies, there is one thing which can make you tremble, and that is our good corn whiskey."

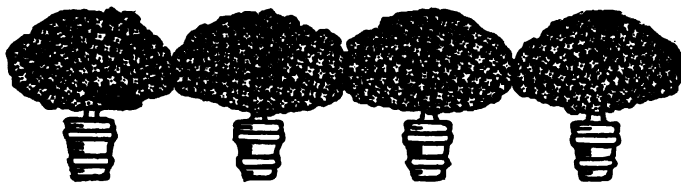
"Odds life!" cried O'Hara, "who has so libelled us? Man, we'd start three glasses ahead of you, and then drink you under the table, on a challenge, but for this ball that we are due at."

"A pretty brag," scoffed Brereton, "since you have an excuse to avoid its test. But come, we have three good hours; but drink Grayson even in that time, and I will warrant you'll not be able to sit your horses. Come, fill up your glasses from decanter and kettle, and I will give you a toast to begin, to which you must drink bumpers. Here's to the soldier who fights and loves, and may he never lack for either."

Four hours later, when Brereton rose from the table, Stevens and O'Hara were lying on the floor, Boudinot was fallen forward, his head resting among the dishes on the table, fast asleep, and Mobray and Grayson, clasped in each other's arms, were reeling forth different ditties under the impression that they were singing the same song. Tiptoeing from the room, the aide went to the kitchen door and said to the publican, "Order one of the dragoons to make ready Captain Mobray's horse, as he wishes to ride back to Philadelphia." In the passageway he took from the hook the hat, cloak, and sword of the young officer, and, removing his own sash and sabre, donned the three. Stealing back to the scene of the revel, he found Mobray and Grayson now lying on the floor as well, unconscious, though still affectionately holding each other. Kneeling gently, he searched the pockets of the unconscious man until the passport was lighted upon. Thrusting it into his belt, he stole from the room.

"What are the orders for us, sir?" asked the dragoon who held Mobray's horse, as the aide mounted.

With an almost perfect imitation of the baronet's voice, Brereton answered, "Colonel O'Hara will issue directions later," and then as he cantered down the road he added gleefully: "Considerably later. What luck that it should be Fred, whose voice I know so well that I can do it to the life whenever I choose!" Then he laughed with a note of deviltry. "I am popping my head into a noose," he said; "but whether 't is that of hangman or matrimony, time only will show."



XLV

IN THE JAWS OF THE LION

THE ball had been in full progress for an hour when a masker, who from his entrance had stood leaning against the wall, suddenly left his isolated position and walked up to one of the ladies.

"Conceal your face and figure as you will, Miss Meredith, you cannot conceal your grace. Wilt honour me with this quadrille?"

"La, Sir Frederick! That you should know me, and I never dream it was you!" exclaimed the girl, as she gave her hand and let him lead her to where the figures were being formed. "There have been many guesses among the caps as to the identity of him who has held himself so aloof, but not a one suggested you. The disguise makes you look a good three inches taller."

As they took position a feminine domino came boldly across the room to them. "Is this the way you keep your word, Sir William?" she demanded in a low voice, made harsh and grating by the fury it expressed.

"You mistake me, madam," answered the dancer, "though I would such a rapid promotion were a possibility."

The interloper made a startled step backward. "I have watched you for a quarter hour," she exclaimed, as she turned away, "and would have sworn to your figure."

"'Tis wonderful," remarked Janice, "how deceiving a domino can be."

The dance ended, her partner said: "Miss Meredith, I have something to say to you of deepest consequence. Will you not come away from this crowd?"

"Ah, Sir Frederick," pleaded the girl, "do not recur to it again. Though you importune me for a day, I could but make the same reply."

"Sir Frederick passes his word that he will not tease you on that subject to-night; but speak I must concerning this match with Lord Clowes."

"'Tis in vain, sir," replied Janice; "for every moment convinces me the more that I must wed him, and so you will but make my duty the harder."

"I beg you to give me a word apart, for I have a message to you from Colonel Brereton."

Janice's hand dropped from the officer's arm. "What is it?" she asked.

"'Tis not to be given here," urged the man. "I pray you to let me order your equipage and take you away. Another dance will be beginning on the moment, and some one will claim you."

The girl raised her hand and once more placed it on her partner's arm; taking the motion as a consent to his wishes, the officer led her to the doorway.

"Call Miss Meredith's chair," he ordered of the guard grouped about the outer door, and in a moment was able to hand her into the vehicle.

"Where to?" he asked. "I mean — Home!" he cried, in a far louder voice, as if to drown the slip, at the same moment jumping in and taking his seat beside her.

As he did so, the girl shrank away from him toward her corner of the gig. "Who are you?" she cried in a frightened voice.

"Who should I be but John Brereton?"

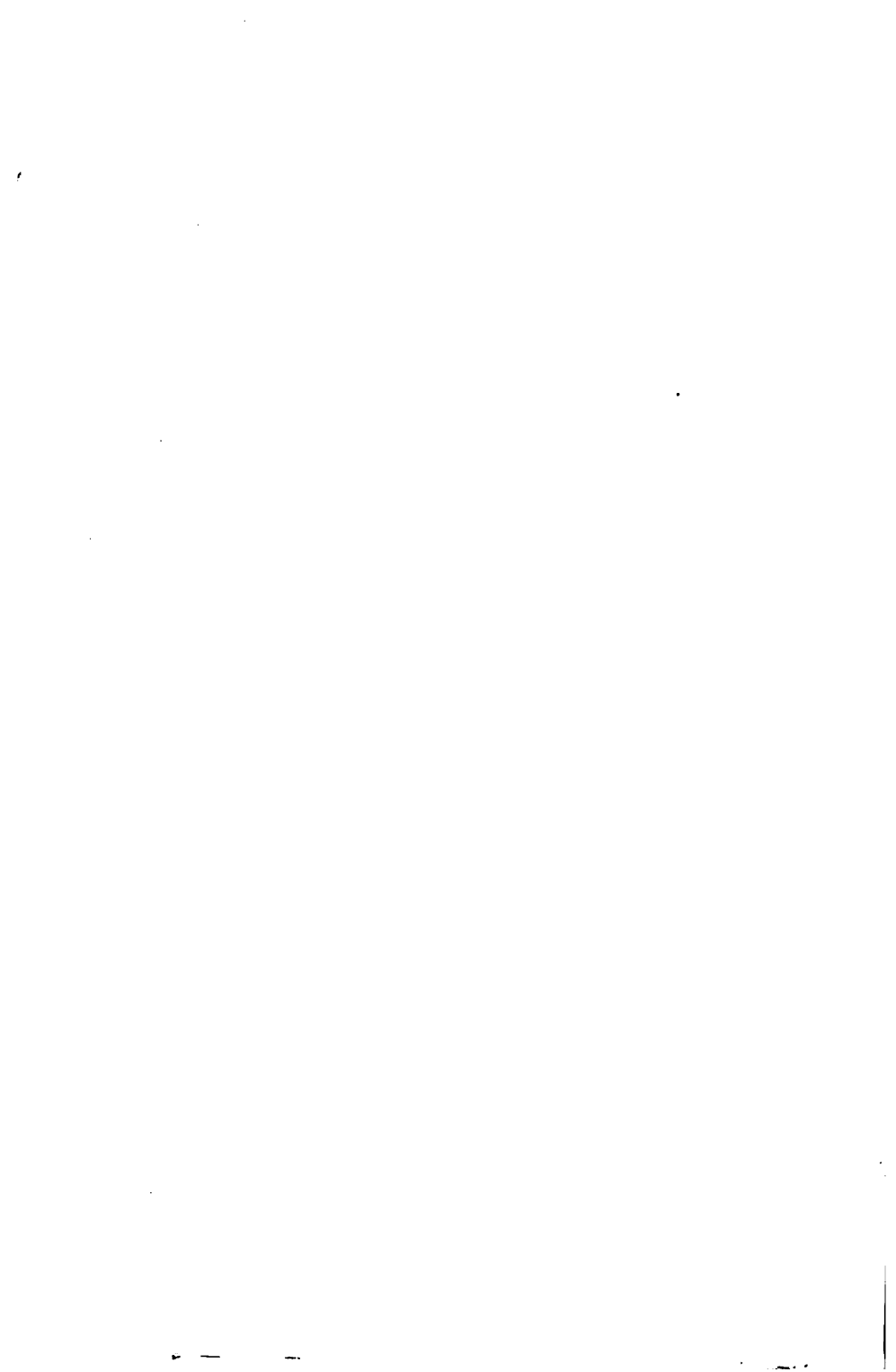
"Are you mad," cried the girl, "to thus venture within the lines?"

"The news which brought me was enough to make me so," answered Jack. "You cannot know what you are doing that you so much as think of marrying that scum. For years he has been nothing but a spy and mackerel, willing to do the dirtiest work, and the scorn of every decent man in London, as here. Are you, are your father and mother, are your friends, all Bedlam-crazed that you even consider it?"

"'Tis as horrible to me as it is to you," moaned Janice; "but it seems the only thing possible. Oh, Colonel Brereton,



“Revealing the figure of Jack stretched on the floor.”



if you but knew our straits, — dependent for all we have, and with a future still more desperate, — you would not blame me for anything I am doing." The girl broke into sobs as she ended, and turning from him leaned her head against the leathern curtain, where she wept, regardless of the fact that the aide possessed himself of her hand, and tried to comfort her, until the chaise drew up at its destination. Lifting rather than helping her from the carriage, Jack supported the maiden up the steps and into the hallway; but no sooner were they there than she freed herself from his supporting arm and exclaimed, "You must not stay here. Any instant you might be discovered."

"Then take me to a room where we can be safe for a moment. I shall not leave you till I have said my say."

"Ah, please!" begged the girl. "Some one is like to enter even now."

Jack's only reply was to turn to the first door and throw it open. Finding that all was dark within, he caught Miss Meredith's fingers, and drew her in after him, saying, as he did so, "Here we are safe, and you can tell me truly of your difficulties."

With her hand held in both of the aide's, Janice began a disconnected outpouring of the tale of her difficulties intermixed by an occasional sob, caused quite as much by the officer's exclamations of sympathy as by the misery of her position. Before a half of it had been spoken one of the hands grasping hers loosened itself, and she was gently drawn by an encircling arm till her head could find support on his shoulder; not resenting and indeed, scarcely conscious of the clasp, she rested it there with a strange sense of comfort and security.

"Alas!" grieved Brereton, when all had been told, "I am as deep, if not deeper, in poverty than you, and so I can give you no aid in money. Bad as things are, however, there is better possible than selling yourself to that worm, if you will but take it."

"What?"

"The French have come to our aid at last, and are sending us a fleet. If Howe will but be as slow as usual, and the States but hasten their levies, we shall catch him between the

fleet and army and Burgoyne him. Even if he act quickly, he can save himself only by abandoning Philadelphia and consolidating his forces at New York. They may then fight on, for both the strength and the weakness of the British is a natural stupidity which prevents them from knowing when they are beaten, but all doubt as to the outcome will be over. Once more it will be possible for you to dwell at Greenwood, if you will but — ”

“But dad-da says they will take it away and exile us,” broke in Janice.

“I have no doubt the rag-tag politicians, if not too busy scheming how to cripple General Washington, will set to on some such piece of folly, for by their persecutions and acts of outlawry and escheatage they have driven into Toryism enough to almost offset the Whigs the British plundering has made. But from this you can be saved if you will but let me.” As the officer ended, the clasp of his arm tightened, though it lost no element of the caress.

“How?”

“I stand well in the cause; and though I could not, I fear, save your property to you, they would never take it once it were in Whig hands, and so by a marriage to me you can secure it. Ah, Miss Meredith, you have said you do not love me, and I stand here to-night a beggar, save for the sword I wear; but I love you as never man loved woman before, and my life shall be given to tenderness and care for you. Surely your own home with me is better than exile with that cur! And I’ll make you love me! I’ll woo you till I win you, my sweet, if it take a life to do it.” Raising the hand he held, the aide kissed it fondly. “I know I’ve given you reason to think me disrespectful and rough; I know I have the devil’s own temper; but if I’ve caused you pain at moments, I’ve suffered tenfold in the recollection. Can you not forgive me?” Once again he eagerly caressed her hand; and finding that she offered no resistance to the endearments, Jack, with an inarticulate cry of delight, stooped and pressed his lips to her cheek.

On the instant Janice felt a hand laid on her shoulders, then on her head, as if some one were feeling of her.

"Who is this?" demanded Jack, lifting his head with a start.

The question was scarce uttered when the sound of a blow came to the girl's ears, and the arm which had been supporting her relaxed its hold, as the lover sank rather than fell to the floor. With loud screams the girl staggered backward, groping her way blindly in the dark. There came the sound of feet hurrying down the hallway, and the door was thrown open by one of the men servants, revealing, by the shaft of light which came through it, the figure of Jack stretched on the floor, with the commissary kneeling upon him, engaged in binding his wrists with a handkerchief.

"Out to the stables, and get me a guard!" ordered Lord Clowes. "I have a spy captured here. No; first light those candles from the lamp in the hall. I advise ye, Miss Meredith," he said scoffingly, "that next time ye arrange an assignation with a lover that ye take the precaution to assure yourself that the room is unoccupied."

"Oh, Lord Clowes," implored the girl, "won't you let him go for my sake?"

"That plea is the least likely of any to gain your wish," responded the baron, derisively.

"I will promise that I will never wed him, will never see him again," offered Janice.

"Of that I can give ye assurance," retorted the commissary, rising and picking up from where he had dropped it the horse pistol with which he had stunned the unconscious man. "A drum-head court-martial will sit not later than to-morrow morning, Miss Meredith, and there will be one less rebel in the world ere nightfall. Your promise is a fairly safe one to make. Here," he continued, as the soldiers came running into the room, "fetch a pail of water and douse it over this fellow, for I want to carry him before Sir William. Ye were wise not to remove your wraps, Miss Meredith, for I shall have to ask your company as well."

When the aide was sufficiently conscious to be able to stand, he was put between two of the soldiers, and ten minutes later the whole party reached the house of the commander-in-chief. Given entrance, without waiting to have their arrival an-

nounced, the commissary led the way through the parlour into the back room, where, about a supper table, the British commander, Mrs. Loring, and two officers were sitting.

"Ye must pardon this intrusion, Sir William," explained Lord Clowes, as Howe, in surprise, faced about, "but we have just caught a spy red-handed, and an important one at that, being none less than Colonel Brereton, an aide of Mr. Washington. Bring him forward, sergeant."

As Jack was led into the strong light, Mrs. Loring started to her feet with a scream, echoed by an exclamation of "By God!" from one of the officers, while the three or four glasses at Howe's place were noisily swept into a jumble by the impulsive swing of the general's arm as he threw himself backward and rested against the table.

"Charlie, Charlie!" cried Mrs. Loring. "You here?"

Standing rigidly erect, the aide said coldly, "My name is John Brereton; nor have I the honour of your acquaintance."

"What 's to do here?" ejaculated Lord Clowes. "I know the man to be what he says, and that he has come in disguise within our lines to spy."

Without looking at the commissary, Jack answered: "I wore no disguise when I passed through your lines, nor have I for a moment laid aside my uniform."

"Call ye those rags a uniform?" jeered the commissary.

Howe gave a hearty laugh. "Why, yes, baron," he answered. "Know you not the rebel colours by this time?"

"And how about the domino he wears over them, and the mask I hold in my hand?" contended Lord Clowes.

"I procured them this evening at the Franklin house in Second Street, as you will learn by sending some one to inquire, merely to attend the ball."

A second exclamation broke from Mrs. Loring: "Then 't was you I mistook for — Sir William, I thought 't was you from his figure."

Again the general laughed. "Ho, Loring," said he to one of the officers. "What say you to that?"

"Take and hang me, or send me to the pest hole you kill your prisoners in, but let me get away from here," raged Jack,



On the way to General Horne's



white with passion, as he gave a futile wrench in an attempt to free his hands.

"Art so anxious to be hanged, boy?"

"'Tis a fit end to a life begun as mine was!" answered the aide.

"Oh, Sir William," spoke up Janice, "he did not come to spy, but only to see me. You will not hang him for that, surely?"

"Yoicks! Must you snare, even into the hangman's noose, every one that looks but at you, Miss Janice? If the day ever comes when the innocent no longer swing for the guilty, 'tis you will be hung."

"We lose time over this badinage, Sir William," complained the commissary, angrily. "The fellow is a spy without question."

"He is not," cried Mrs. Loring; "and he shall not even be a prisoner. You will not hold him, Sir William, when he came but to see the maid he loves?"

"Come, sir," said the general. "Wilt ask thy life of me?"

"No. And be damned to you!"

"You see, Jane."

"I care not what he says; you shall let him go free."

"Are ye all mad?" fumed the commissary.

"He ever had the art of getting the women on his side, Clowes," laughed Sir William, good-naturedly. "How the dear creatures love a man of fire! Look you, boy, with such a friend as Mrs. Loring — to say nothing of others — no limit can be set to your advancement, if you will but put foolish pride in your pocket, and throw in your lot with us."

"I'd sooner starve with Washington than feast with you."

"That's easily done!" remarked Loring, jeeringly.

"Not so easily as in your prisons," retorted Jack.

"Don't be foolish and stick to your tantrums, lad," persuaded Howe.

"Is a man foolish who elects to stick to the winning side? For you are beaten, Sir William, and none know it better than you."

"Damn thy tongue!" roared Howe, springing up.

"Don't blame him for it, William," cried Mrs. Loring. "How can he be other than a lad of spirit?"

Howe fell back into his seat. "There 't is again. Ah, gentlemen, the sex beat us in the end! Well, Jane, since thou't commander-in-chief, please issue thy orders."

"Set him free at once."

"We can scarce do that, though we 'll not hang him as a spy, lest all the caps go into mourning. Commissary Loring, he is yours; we will hold him as a prisoner of war."

"Do that and you must answer for it," said Jack. "You can hang me as a spy, if you choose, but yesterday I rode into Germantown under a flag of truce, and on your own pass, as one of the commissioners of exchange. What word will you send to General Washington if you attempt to hold me prisoner?"

"Well done!" exclaimed Howe. "One would almost think it had been prearranged. Release his arms, sergeant. Loring, let the boy have a horse and a pass to Germantown. I rely on your honour, sir, that you take no advantage of what you have seen or heard within our lines."

Jack bowed assent without a word.

"And now, sir, that you are free," went on Sir William, "have you no thanks for us?"

"Not one."

"Ah, Charlie," begged Mrs. Loring, "just a single word of forgiveness."

Without a sign to show he heard her, Jack went to Janice and took her hand. "Don't forget my pledge. Save you I can, if you will but let me." He stooped his head slightly and hesitated for a moment, his eyes fixed on her lips, then he kissed her hand.

And as he did so, Mrs. Loring burst into tears. "You are killing me by your cruelty," she cried.

"Ah, Colonel Brereton, say something kind to her!" begged the girl, impulsively.

Wheeling about, Jack strode forward, till he stood beside the woman. "This scoundrel," he began, indicating Clowes with a contemptuous gesture, "is seeking to force Miss Meredith into a marriage: save her from that, and the wrong you did me is atoned."

"I will; I will!" replied Mrs. Loring, lifting her head



Sir William Howe.

eagerly. "I'll — Ah, Charlie, one kiss — just one to show that I am forgiven — No, not for that," she hurriedly added, as the aide drew back — "to show — for what I will do for her. Everything I can I will — Just one."

For an instant Brereton hesitated, then bent his head; and the woman, with a cry of joy, threw her arms about his neck, and kissed him not once, but five or six times, and would have continued but for his removing her hands and stepping backward.

"Come, sir," said Loring, irritably, "if the whole army is not to have wind of this, follow me. Daybreak is not far away, and you should be in the saddle."

The aide once more went to Janice, and would have again taken her hand; but the girl shrank away, and turned her back upon him.

"One farewell," pleaded Jack.

"You have had it," replied Janice, without turning.

"Ay. Be off with you," seconded Howe, and without a word Brereton followed Loring from the room.

As the front door banged, and ere any one had spoken, the thunder of a cannon sounded loud and clear, and at short intervals other booms succeeded, as if the first was echoing repeatedly. But the trained ear of the general was not deceived.

"'T is the water battery saluting," he said, rising. "So Sir Henry Clinton has evidently arrived. Come, gentlemen, 't is only courteous that we meet him at the landing."



XLVI

THE FAREWELL TO HOWE

IN the movement that ensued, Janice slipped into the hallway, and in a moment she was scurrying along the street, so busy with her thoughts that she forgot the satin slippers which had hitherto been so carefully saved from the pavements. She had not gone a square when the sound of footsteps behind her made the girl quicken her pace; but instantly the pursuer accelerated his, and, really alarmed, Janice broke into a run which ended only as she darted up the steps of her home, where she seized the knocker and banged wildly. Before any one had been roused within, the man stood beside her, and with his first word the fugitive recognised Lord Clowes.

"I meant not to frighten ye," he said; "but ye should not have come away alone, for there are pretty desperate knaves stealing about, and had ye encountered the patrol, ye would have been taken to the provost-marshal for carrying no lantern."

Relieved to know who it was, but too breathless to make reply, Janice leaned against the lintel until a sleepy soldier gave them entrance. There was a further delay while Lord Clowes ignited a dip from the lamp and lighted her to the stairway. Here he handed it to her, but retaining his own hold, so as to prevent her departing, he said:—

"I lost my temper at hearing that young scamp make such ardent love, and so I spoke harshly to ye. Canst not make allowance for a lover's jealousy?"

"Please let me have the light."

"Whether ye pardon me or no, of one thing I am sure," went on Clowes, still holding the candle, "ye are not so love-sick of this rogue as to overlook his seeking the aid of his dis-

carded mistress in his suit of ye. I noted your look as she kissed him."

"'T is not a subject I choose to discuss with you, nor is it one for any gentlewoman," said Janice, dropping her hold on the candle and starting upstairs. At the top she paused long enough to say, "Nor do I trust your version," and then hurried to her room and bolted the door.

Here, dark as it was, she went straight to the bureau, and pulling open the bottom drawer fumbled about in it. Her hands presently encountered the unfinished purse, and for a moment they closed on it, while something resembling a sob escaped her. But with one hand she continued searching; and so soon as her groping put her fingers on the miniature of Mrs. Loring she rose, and feeling the way to a window, she opened it and threw out the slip of ivory. The girl made a motion as if to send the purse after it, but checked the impulse, and forgetting to close the window, and without a thought of her once treasured gown, she threw herself on the bed, and began to sob miserably. Before many minutes, worn out with excitement, fatigue, and the lateness, she fell asleep, but it was only to dream uneasily over the night's doings, in which all was a confused jumble, save for the eager tones of her lover's voice as he pleaded his suit, the sight of him as he lay on the floor after the candles had been lighted, and, finally, the look in his eyes as he made his farewell. Yet no sooner did these recur than they were succeeded by that of Mrs. Loring's eager and passionate kissing of Brereton, and each time this served to bring Janice back into a half-awake condition.

After breakfast the next morning, as she was pretendedly reading Racine's "Iphigénie," lest her mother should find her doing nothing and order her to some task, a letter was handed her by one of the servants, with word that it had been brought by a soldier; and breaking the seal, Janice read:

MY DEER CHILD

*pleas do forgiv al i spoke to yu a bout the furst time i see yu
for i did not understan it at al i was dredful up set bi last nite
and feel mitey pukish this mawning, but i hope yu will cum to see*

*me soon for i want much to tawk with yu a bout how i can help
yu and to kiss and hugg yu for yu ar so prity that i shud
lov just to tuch yu lik sum one else did yu see how his eys lovd
yu when he was going a way he yused to look that way at me
and i cried mitey hard al nite at his krulty pleas cum soon
to unhapy*

JANE LORING.

ps. i shal cum to yu if yu dont cum quick

"There is no answer," the maiden told the servant; then, as he went to the door she added, "And should a Mrs. Loring wish to see me, you will refuse me to her."

Left alone, Janice went to the fireplace, in which the advance of spring no longer made a fire necessary, and, taking from its niche the tinder box, she struck flint on steel, and in a moment had a blaze started. Not waiting to let it gain headway, she laid the letter upon the flame, and held it there with the tongs till it ignited. "I knew without your telling me," she said, "that he no longer loved you, and great wonder it is, considering your age, that he ever could."

"Hast turned fire-worshipper?" demanded André's voice, merrily, as she still knelt, "for if so, 't will be glad news for the sparks."

The girl sprang to her feet. "I—I was just burning a—a—some rubbish," she answered.

"Here I am, not in the lion's den, but in the jackal's, and my stay must be brief. Canst detect that I am big with news?"

"Of what?"

"This morning Sir Henry Clinton arrived, and for the first time the army learns that Sir William has resigned his command, and is leaving us. The field officers wish to mark his departure by a farewell *fête* in his honour, and as it would be a mockery without the ladies, we are appealing to them to aid us. We plan to have a tourney of knights, each of whom is to have a damsel who shall reward him with a favour at the end of the contest. I have bespoken fair Peggy for mine, and I am sure Mobray, who is not yet returned, will ask you. Wilt help us?"

"Gladly," assented Janice, eagerly, "if dad-da will let me."

"I met him in High Street on my way here, made my plea, and, though at first he pulled a negative look, when I reminded him he owed Sir William for a good place, he relented and said you could."

"And what am I to do?"

"You are to be gowned in a Turkish costume, in the —"

"Nay, Captain André," replied Janice, shaking her head, "we are too poor to spend any money in such manner."

"Think you the knights are so lacking in chivalry that we could permit our guests to pay? The subscription is large enough to cover all expenses, the stuffs are already purchased, and all you will have to do is to make them up in the manner of this sketch."

"Then I accept with pleasure and thanks."

"Tis we owe the thanks. And now farewell, for I have much to do."

"Captain André," said the girl, as he opened the door, "I have a question — Wilt answer me something?"

"Need you ask?"

"I suppose 'tis a peculiar one, and so — Do you — is it generally thought by — Do the gentlemen of the army deem Mrs. Loring beautiful?"

"Too handsome for the good of our — of the army."

"Even though she paints and powders?"

"But in London and Paris 'tis the mode."

"I think 'tis a horrid custom."

"And so would every woman had she but thy cheeks. Ah, Miss Meredith, 'tis easy for the maid whose tints are a daily toast at the messes to blame those to whom nature has not given a transparent skin and mantling blood."

When Mobray returned from Germantown, he at once sought out Janice and confirmed André's action. Though he found her working on the costume, it was with so melancholy a countenance that he demanded the cause.

"Tis what you know already," moaned the girl, miserably. "Lord Clowes is pressing me for an answer, and now dad-da is urgent that I give him ay."

"Why?"

"He went to see Sir Henry, and had so cold a reception that he thinks 't is certain he is to lose his place, let alone the report that General Clinton was heard to say Sir William's friends were to be got rid of. What can we do?"

"But Char — Brereton assured me he had spoked the fellow's wheel by securing the aid of —"

"'T is naught to me what he has done," interrupted Janice, proudly; "nor did I give him the right to intervene."

"You must not give yourself to Clowes. 'T is — ah — rather than see that I'll speak out."

"About what?"

"Leftenant Hennion is not dead! 'T was but another of Clowes' lies, and your father shall know it, let him do his worst." Without giving his courage time to cool, the young fellow dashed across the hallway to the office where the commissary and squire were sitting, and announced: "News, Mr. Meredith. Leftenant Hennion is alive, for his name was on the rebel lists of prisoners to be exchanged."

"Oddsbodikins!" ejaculated the squire. "Here's an upset, Clowes, to all our talk."

"Ye'll not be fool enough to let it make any difference," growled the baron, his eyes resting on Mobray with a look that boded no good. "Ye'll only increase your difficulties by holding to that old folly."

"Nay, Clowes, Lambert Meredith ne'er broke his word to any man, and, God helping, he never will."

With a real struggle, the commissary held his anger in check. "I'll talk of this later," he said, after a pause, "when I can speak less warmly than now I feel. As for ye, sir," he said, facing Mobray, "I will endeavour — the favour ye have done shall not be forgotten."

"Take what revenge you please, my Lord," replied Mobray, his voice shaking a little none the less, "I have done what as a gentleman I was compelled to do, and am ready for the consequences, be they what they may."

"A fit return for my lenience," remarked Clowes to the squire after Sir Frederick had made his exit. "He has long owed me money, for which I have never pressed him, yet now he would have it that if I but ask payment, 't is revenge."

One result of Mobray's outbreak was to give Janice another knight for the pageant.

"'Tis a crying shame," André told her; "but poor Fred has gone to the wall at last, and is to be sold up. Therefore he chooses to withdraw from the tourney, and begs me to make his apologies to you, for he is too dumpish to wish to see any one. 'Twill make no difference to you, save that you will have Brigade Major Tarleton in place of the baronet."

"Can nothing be done for him?" asked Janice.

"Be assured, if anything could be, his fellow-officers would not have allowed the army to lose him, for he is loved by every man in the service; but he is in for over eight thousand pounds."

"'Tis very sad," sighed Janice. "I thought him a man of property," she added aloud, while to herself she said, "Then it could not have been he who bought my miniature."

"Nay, he was sometimes in funds by his winnings, but he long since scattered his patrimony."

Janice's letter to Tabitha had long before, by its length, become in truth a journal, and to its pages were confided an account of the farewell *fête* to the British general:—

" 'The Mischianza,' as 't is styled, Tibbie, began at four o'clock in the afternoon with a grand regatta, all the galleys and flatboats being covered with awnings and dressed out with colours and streamers, making a most elegant spectacle. The embarkation took place at the upper end of the city, mommy and I entering the 'Hussar' which bore Sir William Howe. Preceded by the music boats, the full length of the town we were rowed, whilst every ship was decked with flags and ensigns, and the shores were crowded with spectators, who joined in 'God save the King' when the bands played it; and the 'Roebuck' frigate fired a royal salute. About six we drew up opposite the Wharton house, and landing, made our way between files of troops and sailors to a triumphal arch that ushered to an amphitheatre which had been erected for the guests, of whom, Tibbie, but four hundred were invited. Behind these seats spectators not to be numbered darked the whole plain around, held in check by a strong guard which controlled their curiosity. The fourteen

knights' ladies (selected, Tibbie, so 't was given out, as the foremost in youth, beauty, and fashion, and into a fine frenzy it threw those maids who were not asked) were seated in the front, and though 't is not for me to say it, we made a most pleasing display. Our costume was fancy, and consisted of gauze turbans, spangled and edged with gold and silver, on the right side of which a veil of the same hung as low as the waist, and the left side of the turban was enriched with pearls and tassels of gold or silver, crested with a feather. The jacket was of the polonaise kind, of white silk with long sleeves, and sashes worn around the waist tied with a large bow on the left side, hung very low and trimmed, spangled, and fringed according to the colours of the knight. But, wilt believe it, Tibbie, instead of skirts, 't was loose trousers, gathered at the ankle, we wore, and a fine to-do mommy made at first over the idea, till dad-da said I might do as the other girls did; though indeed, Tibbie, 't is to be confessed I felt monstrous strange, and scarce enjoyed a dance through thought of them. And here let me relate that this was the ostensible reason for Mr. Shippen refusing to allow Margaret and Sarah to take part after they had their gowns made (and weren't they dancing mad at being forbid!), but 't is more shrewdly suspected that 't was because of a rumour (which no thinking person credits) that Philadelphia is to be evacuated, and so, being a man of no opinions, he chose not to risk offending the Whigs.

"Once seated, the combined bands of the army sounded a very loud and animated march, which was the signal for the beginning of the ceremony of the carousel. The seven knights of The Blended Rose, most marvellously dressed in a costume of the Henry IV. period of France (which, being so beyond description, I have endeavoured a sketch), on white horses, preceded by a herald and three trumpeters, entered the quadrangle, and by proclamation asserted that the ladies of The Blended Rose excelled in wit, beauty, and accomplishment those of the whole world, and challenged any knight to dispute it. Thereupon appeared the seven knights of The Burning Mountain, and by their herald announced that they would disprove by arms the vainglorious assertions of the knights of The Blended Rose and show that the ladies of The Burning Mountain as far excelled all others in charms as the knights themselves surpassed all others in prowess.

Upon this a glove of defiance was thrown, the esquires presented their knights with their lances, the signal for the charge was sounded, and the conflict ensued, until on a second signal they fell back, leaving but their chiefs in single combat. These fighting furiously, were presently parted by the judges of the field, with the announcement that they were of equal valour, and their ladies of equal beauty. Forming in single file, they advanced and saluted, and a finish was put to this part of the entertainment.

"We now retired to the house for tea, where the knights, having dismounted, followed us, and paid homage to their fair ones, from each of whom they received a favour. The ball then succeeded, which lasted till nine, when the company distributed themselves at the windows and doors to view fireworks of marvellous beauty, ending with a grand illumination of the arch. More dancing then occupied us, till we were summoned to supper, which was served in a saloon one hundred and eighty feet long, gaily painted and decorated, and made brilliant by a great number of lustres hung from the roof, while looking-glasses, chandeliers, and girandoles decked the walls, the whole enlivened by garlands of flowers and festoons of silk and ribbons. Here we were waited upon by twenty-four negroes in blue and white turbans and party-coloured clothes and sashes, whilst the most pathetic music was performed by a concealed band. Toasts to the king and queen, the royal family, the army and navy, with their respective commanders, the knights and their ladies, and the ladies in general, were drunk in succession, each followed by a flourish of music, when once again the dancing was resumed, and lasted till the orb of day intruded his presence upon us.

"Sir William left us at noon to-day, regretted by the whole army, and, as I write this, I can hear a salute of guns in honour of Sir Henry Clinton's assuming the command. Pray Heaven he does not remove dad-da.

"At last I know, Tibbie, what court life must be like."

Three days after the departure of Howe, the squire came into dinner, a paper in hand, and with a beaming face. "Fine news!" he observed. "I am not to be displaced."

"Good!" cried the commissary, while Janice clapped her

hands. "I spoke to Sir Henry strongly in your favour, and am joyed to hear that it has borne fruit."

"How dost thou know, Lambert?" asked Mrs. Meredith.

"I have here an order to load the 'Rose' tender with such rebel property as the commissaries shall designate, and superintend its removal to New York. They'd ne'er employ me on so long a job, were I marked to lose my employment, eh, Clowes?"

"Well reasoned. For 't is not merely a task of time, but one of confidence. But look ye, man, if ye're indeed to make a voyage to York and back, which will likely take a month, 't is best that we settle this question of marriage ere ye go. I've given Miss Janice time, I think ye'll grant, and 't will be an advantage in your absence that she and Mrs. Meredith have one bound to protect them."

"I'd say ay in a moment, Clowes, but for my word to Hennion."

"'T is a promise thou shouldst ne'er have made, and which it is now thy every interest to be quit of, let alone that 't is so distasteful to thy daughter."

"A promise is a promise," answered the father, with an obstinate motion of head.

"And a fool's a fool," retorted Clowes, losing his temper. "In counsel and aid I've done my best for ye; now go your gait, and see what comes of it."

A week later, Mr. Meredith bade farewell to wife and daughter.

"I wish you were n't going, dad-da," Janice moaned. "'T is so akin to last summer that it frights me."

"Nay, lass, be grateful that I have the job to do, and that with good winds I shall return within a fortnight. Clowes has passed his word that ye shall want for nothing. I'll be back ere ye know I've gone."

There was a good cause, however, for the girl's fear of the future, for in less than a week from her father's sailing, on every street corner, in every tavern, and in every drawing-room of the town the news that Philadelphia was to be evacuated was being eagerly and anxiously discussed.



XLVII

THE EVACUATION

CONFIRMATION of the rumour, so far as Mrs. Meredith and Janice were concerned, was first received through the commissary.

"Ay," he told them, when questioned; "'t was decided at a council of war the very day Howe left us, and that was why we at once began transferring our stores and the seized property to New York, one cargo of which your husband was put in charge. 'T will tax our shipping to the utmost to save it all."

"But why didst thou not warn us, so that we might have embarked with him?" asked Mrs. Meredith.

"'T was a military secret to be told to no one."

"Can dadda return ere the evacuation begins?"

"'T is scarce possible, even if his orders permit it."

"Then what are we to do?"

"Thou hadst best apply at once to the deputy quarter-master-general for transports."

Mrs. Meredith acted on this advice the following day, but without success.

"Think you the king's ships and transports have naught to do but act as packet-boats for you Americans?" the deputy asked. "Hundreds of applications have been filed already, and not another one will we receive. If you'd for New York, hire a passage in a private ship."

This was easier to recommend than to do, for such was the frantic demand for accommodation that the prices had been raised to exorbitant figures, quite beyond their means. So appeal was made once more to Clowes.

"'T is something of a quandary," he remarked; "but there is a simple way out."

"What?"

"I'd have saved ye all worry over the matter but that I wished ye to learn the difficulties. I have never made pretence to doing favours out of mere kindness of heart, and ye know quite as well as I why I have given ye lodging and other aids. But for that very reason I am getting wearied of doing all and receiving nothing, and have come to the end. Give me Miss Janice, and my wife and mother shall have passage in the ship I sail in."

"You take a poor way, Lord Clowes, to gain your wish," said Janice. "Generosity —"

"Has had a six months' trial, and brought me no nearer to a consummation," interrupted the baron. "Small wonder I sicken of it and lose patience."

"'T is not to be expected that I would let Janice wed thee when her father has given thee nay."

"Because he has passed his word to another, and so holds himself bound. He said he'd consent but for that, and by acting in his absence ye can save him a broken oath, yet do the sensible thing. He'll be glad enough once done; that I'll tie to."

"It scarce betterers it in a moral sense," replied Mrs. Meredith. "However, we will not answer till we have had a chance to discuss it by ourselves."

"Janice," said her mother, once they were alone, "thy dread of that man is a just one, and I —"

"I know — I know," broke in the daughter, miserably; "but I — if I can make us all easy as to money and future —"

"Those are but worldly benefits, child."

"But, mommy," said the girl, chokingly, as she knelt at her mother's feet and threw her arms about Mrs. Meredith's waist, "since live we must, what can we do but — but — Oh, would that I had never been born!" and then the girl buried her head in her mother's lap.

"'T is most unseemly, child, to speak so. God has put us here to punish and chasten us for Adam's sin; and 't is not for us, who sinned in him, to question His infinite wisdom."

"Then I wish He'd tell me what it is my duty to do!" lamented Janice.

"Thinkest thou he has nothing to do but take thought of thy affairs?"

"Wouldst have me marry him, mommy?" asked the girl, chokingly.

"Let us talk no further now, child, but take a night's thought over it."

They were engaged in discussing the problem the following afternoon, when Lieutenant Hennion burst in upon them.

"Why, Phil!" cried Mrs. Meredith; and Janice, springing from her chair, met him half-way with outstretched hand, while exclaiming, "Oh, Mr. Hennion, 't is indeed good to see an old friend's face."

"'T is glad tidings ter me ter hearn you say that," declared Philemon, eagerly. "Yestere'en General Lee and the other rebel prisoners came out from Philadelphia, and we, having been brought from Morristown some days ago, were at once set at liberty; but 't was too late ter come in, so we waited for daylight. I only reported at quarters, and then, learning where you lodged, I come—I came straight ter—to find how you fared."

Alternating explanation and commentary, the women told of their difficulties.

"I can't aid you to get aboard one of the ships, for I've had ter draw my full pay all the time I was prisoner, the rebels nigh starving us, let alone freezing, so money's as scarce with me as with you. But I'll go ter—to my colonel, and see if I can't get permission that you may go with our baggage train."

"'T will be a benefit indeed, if you can do that," exclaimed Mrs. Meredith.

"Then I'll not tarry now, but be off about it at once, for there was a rumour at brigade headquarters that three regiments had been ordered across the river this afternoon, and that it meant a quick movement." He picked up his hat as if to go, then paused, and haltingly continued, "I hope, Ja—Ja—Janice, that you've come ter—to like—not to be so set against what I wants so much. It's nigh a year since I seen—saw you last, but it's only made me love you the better."

The girl, with a look of real contrition, answered, "Oh, Mr. Hennion, do not force—'T would be wrong to us both if I deceived you."

"You can't love me?"

"I — oh, I believe I am a giddy, perverse female, for I seem able to care for no man."

"The world I'd give ter win you, Janice; but I'll not tease you now, the more that I can be doing you a service, and that's joy enough."

Philemon went toward the door; but ere he had reached it Janice had overtaken him and seized his hand in both of hers. "You deserve to love a better maid," she said huskily, "and I wish you might; but perhaps 't will be some comfort to you to know that dad-da holds to his promise, and — and that I am less wilful and more obedient, I hope, than once I was."

As Philemon opened his mouth to make reply, he was cut short by the entrance of the commissary, who halted and frowned as he took in the hand-clasp of the two.

"Humph!" he muttered, and then louder remarked, "Yet another! Ye'll be pleased to know, sir, that Miss Meredith's favours mean little. But a month since I caught that fellow Brereton regaling himself with her lips."

"That's a lie, I know," retorted Philemon, angrily; but as he glanced at the girl and saw her crimson, he exclaimed, "You just said you cared for no man!"

"It — it was at a moment when I scarce knew what I did," faltered Janice, "and — and — now I would not be kissed by him for anything in the world. I — I am — I was honest in what I said to you, Philemon."

"I'll believe anything you say, Janice," impulsively replied the lieutenant, as with unprecedented boldness he raised her hand to his lips. Then facing Clowes he said: "And I advise you ter have a care how you speak of Miss Meredith. I'll not brook hearing her aspersed." With this threat he left the room.

"I regret to have been an intruder on so tender a scene," sneered the commissary; "but I came with information that was too important to delay. Orders have been issued that all ships make ready to drop down the river with the tide at daybreak to-morrow, and 't is said that the army will begin its march across the Jerseys but a twenty-four hours later. So there is no time to lose if ye wish to sail with me. The marriage must

take place by candle-light this evening, and we must embark immediately after."

"Philemon has promised us his aid, Lord Clowes," replied Mrs. Meredith, "and so we need not trouble thee."

"Hennion! But he must go with his regiment."

"He offers us a place in the baggage train."

"Evidently he has not seen the general orders. Clinton is too good an officer to so encumber himself; and the orders are strict that only the women of the regiments be permitted to march with the army. I take it ye scarce wish to class yourselves with them, however much it might delight the soldiery."

"They could scarce treat us worse than thee, Lord Clowes," said Mrs. Meredith, indignantly. "Nor do I believe that even the rank and file would take such advantage of two helpless women as thou art seeking to do."

"Tush! I may state it o'er plainly; but my intention is merely to make clear for your own good that ye have no other option but that I offer ye."

"Any insults would be easier to bear than yours," declared Janice, indignantly; "and theirs would be for once, while yours are unending."

"Such folly is enough to make one forswear the whole sex," the commissary angrily replied. "Nor am I the man to put up with such womanish humoursomeness. 'I've stood your caprice till my patience is exhausted; now I'll teach ye what —'"

"Heyday!" exclaimed André, as a servant threw open the door and ushered him in. "What have we here? I trust I am not *mal apropos*?"

"Far from it," spoke up Janice. "And thou 'rt welcome."

"I come laden with grief and with messages," said André, completely ignoring Clowes' presence. "Mr. Hennion, whom I met at headquarters, asked me to tell you his request was refused, that his regiment was even then embarking to cross the Delaware, and that therefore he could not return, whatever his wish. The Twenty-sixth is under orders to follow at daybreak tomorrow, and so we plan an impromptu farewell supper this evening at my quarters. Will you forgive such brief notice and help to cheer our sorrow with your presence?"

"With more than pleasure," assented Mrs. Meredith; "and if 't will not trouble thee, we will avail ourselves of thy escort even now."

"Would that such trouble were commoner!" responded André, holding open the door.

"Then we'll get our coverings without delay."

Lord Clowes, with a deepened scowl on his face, intercepted them at the door. "One word in private with these ladies," he said to the captain. Then, as André with a bow passed out first, he continued, to the women: "I have warned ye that we must be aboard ship ere ten. Refuse me my will, and ye'll not be able to rejoin Mr. Meredith. Take my offer, or remain in the city."

"We shall remain," responded Mrs. Meredith.

"With your husband a warden of the seized property of the rebels, and known to have carried away a ship-load of it? Let me warn ye that the rebels whom we drove out of Philadelphia will be in no sweet mood when they return and find what we have destroyed or carried off. Hast heard how the Bostonians treated Captain Fenton's wife and fifteen-year-old daughter? Gentlewomen though they were, the mob pulled them out of their house, stripped them naked in the public streets, smeared them with tar and feathers, and then walked them as a spectacle through the town. And Fenton had done far less to make himself hated than Mr. Meredith. Consider their fate, and decide if marriage with me is the greater evil."

"Every word thou hast spoken, Lord Clowes," replied Mrs. Meredith, "has tended to make us think so."

"Then may you reap the full measure of your folly," raged the commissary.

"Come, Janice," said her mother; and the two, without a parting word, left him. Once upstairs, Janice flung her arms about Mrs. Meredith's neck.

"Oh, mother," she cried, "please, please forgive me! I have ever thought you hard and stern to me, but now I know you are not."

Strive as those at the supper might, they could not make it a merry meal. The officers, with a sense of defeat at heart, and feeling that they were abandoning those who had shown them only kindness, had double cause to feel depressed, while the

ladies, without knowledge of what the future might contain, could not but be anxious, try their all. And as if these were not spectres enough at the feast, a question of Mrs. Meredith as to Mobray added one more gloomy shadow.

"Fred? alas!" one of the officers replied. "He was sold out, and the poor fellow was lodged in the debtors' prison, as you know. As we chose not to have them fall into the hands of the rebels, a general jail delivery was ordered this morning, which set him at large."

"And what became of him?" asked Janice.

"Would that I could learn!" groaned André. "As soon as I was off duty, I sought for him, but he was not to be heard of, go to whom I would. Bah! No more of this graveyard talk. Come, Miss Meredith, I'll give you the subject for a historical painting. I found of Franklin's possessions not a little which took my fancy, and such of it as I chose I carry with me to New York, as fair spoil of war. Prithee, draw a picture of the old fox as he will appear when he hears of his loss. 'T will at least give him the opportunity to prove himself the 'philosopher' he is said to be. I have taken his oil portrait, and when I get fit quarters again I shall hang it, and nightly pray that I may live long enough to do the same to the original. Heaven save me if ever I be captured, though, for I make little doubt that in his rage he would accord me the very fate I wish for him!"

When at last the evening's festivities, if such they might be termed, were over, it was André, preceded by a couple of soldiers with lanterns, who escorted them back to their home, and at Janice's request he ordered the two men to remain in the now deserted house.

"They must leave you before daybreak," the officer warned them; "but they will assure you a quiet night. I would that you were safe in New York, however, and shall rest uneasy till I welcome you there. Ladies, you have made many an hour happier to John André," ended the young officer, his voice breaking slightly. "Some day, God willing, he will endeavour to repay them."

"Oh, Captain André," replied Janice, "'tis we are the debtors indeed!"

"We'll not quarrel over that at parting," said André, forcing a merry note into his voice. "When this wretched rebellion is over, and you are well back at Greenwood, and may that be soon, I will visit you and endeavour to settle debit and credit."

Just as he finished, the sound of drums was heard.

"'Tis past tattoo, surely?" Mrs. Meredith questioned with a start.

"Ay," answered André. "'Tis the rogue's march they are ruffling for a would-be deserter who was drum-headed this evening, and whom they are taking to the State House yard to hang. Brrew! Was not the gloom of to-night great enough without that as a last touch to ring in our ears? What a fate for a soldier who might have died in battle! Farewell, and may it be but a short *au revoir*," and, turning, the young officer hurried away, singing out, in an attempt to be cheery, the soldier's song:—

"Why, soldiers, why
Should we be melancholy, boys?
Why, soldiers, why,
Whose business 't is to die?
What, sighing? fie!
Drown fear, drink on, be jolly, boys.
'T is he, you, or I!"



XLVIII

A TIME OF TERROR

THE Merediths were awakened the next morning by sounds which told of the movements of troops, and all day long the regiments were marching to the river, and as fast as they could be ferried, were transferred to the Jersey side, the townspeople who, by choice or necessity, were left behind being helpless spectators meanwhile. Once again the streets of Philadelphia assumed the appearance of almost absolute desertion ; for as the sun went down the prudent-minded retired within doors, taking good heed to bar shutters and bolt doors, and the precaution was well, for all night long men might be seen prowling about the streets, — jail-birds, British deserters, and other desperadoes, tempted by hope of plunder.

Fearful for their own safety, Mrs. Meredith and Janice failed not to use every means at hand to guard it, not merely closing and securing, so far as they were able, every possible entrance to the house, but as dark came on, their fear led them to ascend to the garret by a ladder through a trap, and drawing this up, they closed the entrance. Here they sat crouched on the bare boards, holding each other, for what seemed to them immeasurable hours ; and such was the intensity of the nervous anxiety of waiting that it was scarcely added to, when, toward daybreak, both thought they detected the tread of stealthy footsteps through the rooms below. Of this they presently had assurance, for when the pound of horses' hoofs was heard outside, the intruders, whoever they might be, were heard to run through the hall and down the stairs with a haste which proved to the miserable women that more than they had cause for fear.

Hardly had this sound died away when a loud banging on the front door reached even their ears, and after several repetitions new fear was given them by the crashing of wood and splintering of glass, which told that some one had broken in a shutter and window to effect an entrance. Once again footsteps on the stairs were heard, and a man rushed into the room underneath them and came to a halt.

"Do you find them?" he shouted to some companion, whose answer could not be heard. "What ho!" he went on in stentorian voice. "Is there any one in this house who can give me word of a family of Merediths?"

Janice reached forward and raised the trap, but her mother caught her arm away, and the door fell with a bang.

"'Tis all right, mommy," the girl protested. "Didst not hear the jingle of his spurs? 'Tis surely an officer, and we need not fear any such."

Even as she spoke the trap was raised by a sabre from below. "Who's above?" the man demanded, and as Janice leaned forward and peeked through the opening, he went on, "I seek—" There he uncovered. "Ah, Miss Meredith, dark as it is above, I could pick you from a thousand by Colonel Brereton's description. I was beginning to fear some misfortune had overtaken you. I am Captain McLane of the light horse. You can descend without fear."

With a relief that was not to be measured, the two dropped the ladder into place and descended.

"Is Colonel Brereton here?" asked Mrs. Meredith.

"Not he, or I suspect he'd never have given me the thrice-repeated charge to make sure of your safety. He is with the main army, now in full pursuit of the British, and we'll hope to come up with the rats ere they get safely to their old hole. Since you are safe I must not tarry, for there is much to —"

"Oh, Captain McLane, can't you stay?" beseeched Janice. "Do not leave us unprotected. I can't tell you what we have suffered through thought of possible violence, and even now —"

"I will station a trooper at the door," the officer promised; "but have no fear. Already patrols are established, and within an hour broadsides will be posted about the city warning all plunderers or other law-breakers that they will be shot or hanged

on sight. General Arnold, who is given command of the city, intends there shall be no disturbance, and he is not the man to have his orders broke."

Set at ease as to their safety, the first concern of the women was a hastily improvised breakfast from the scantily supplied larder which Clowes' servants had abandoned to them. In the kitchen, as well as all over the house, they found ample signs that pilferers had been at work, for every receptacle had been thrown open, drawers dragged out, and the floor littered with whatever the despoilers elected not to take. A month before Janice would probably have been moved to tears at the discovery that her "elegant and dashy robing," as well as her Mischianza costume, had been stolen, but now she scarcely gave either of them a thought, so grateful was she merely to feel that they were safe from violence and insult.

In reinstating her own meagre possessions in their proper receptacles, which was the girl's after-breakfast occupation, she came upon an unfinished silk purse, and this served to bring an end for a time to the restoration of order, while she sat upon the floor in a meditative attitude. Presently she laid it on the bureau with a little sigh and returned to her task. Once this was completed, she again took the purse, and seating herself, set about its completion.

Afraid to stir out of doors, and with little to occupy her, the next three days served to complete the trifle, elaborate and complicated as the pattern was. Meantime, a steady stream of Whigs flooded into the city, and from Captain McLane, who twice dropped in to make sure of their well-being, they learned that the Continental Congress was about to resume its sessions in the city. Ocular proof that the rulers of America were assembling was very quickly brought home to the two, for one morning Janice, answering a rap of the knocker, opened the door to the Honourable Joseph Bagby.

"Well, miss, I guess you're not sorry to see an old friend's face, are you, now that the dandiprat redcoats you've been gallivanting with have shown that they prefer running away to fighting?" was his greeting, as he held out his hand.

Janice, divided in mind by the recollection of his treatment of them and by her fear of the future, extended her own and

allowed it to be shaken, as the easiest means of escaping the still more difficult verbal response.

"Are n't you going to ask me in?" inquired the caller, "for I've got something to say."

"I didn't know that you would want to," faltered Janice, making entrance for him. "Mommy will be gla — will be in the parlour," she said, leading the way to that room.

Without circumlocution, Bagby went at the object of his call the moment the equally embarrassing meeting with Mrs. Meredith was over.

"I came up to town," he announced, "to 'tend Congress, of which I'm now a member;" and here the speaker paused as if to let the new dignity come home to his hearers. "Did n't I tell you I was a rising man? But I had another object in view in being so prompt, and that was to have a talk with you to see if we can't arrange things. 'T is n't given to every girl to marry a Congressman, eh, miss?"

"I — I — suppose not," stammered Janice, frightened, yet with an intense desire to laugh.

"Before I say anything as to that," went on Bagby, "I want to tell you that I've been a good friend of yours. Old Hennion, who's come out hating your dad the worst way, was for introducing a bill in Assembly last session declaring his lands forfeited, but I told him I'd not have it."

"'T is but a duty man owes to prevent evil deeds," said Mrs. Meredith.

"We are very grateful, Mr. Bagby," Janice thought it was necessary to add, with not a little surprise in her voice.

"That's what I guessed you'd be," said the legislator. "Says I to myself, 'They've made a mistake as to the side they took; but when they see that the British is beat, they'll do most anything to put themselves right again and save their property.' Now, if Miss Janice will marry me, there is n't any reason why you should n't all come back to Greenwood and live as fine as a fivepence."

"We should not be willing to give thee our daughter, Mr. Bagby, even were she."

"But I am — for the compliment you offer, sir, I thank you," interjected Janice.

"Now, you just listen to reason," protested Joe. "You must n't think it's only the property I'm set on. I've made a swipe of money in the last year — nigh forty thousand dollars — Continental — so I can afford to marry whom I like ; and though I own that thirty thousand acres is no smouch of land, yet I'm really soft on Miss Janice, and would marry her even if she had n't money, now that I've got some of my own."

"It can make no difference, Mr. Bagby," replied the mother. "Neither her father nor I would consent to her wedding thee, and I know her wishes accord with ours."

Joe, with a somewhat bewildered face and a decidedly awkward movement, picked up his hat. "It don't seem possible," he said, "that you'll throw away all that property ; for, of course, I'm not going to stand between you and old Hennion when you show yourselves so unfriendly."

"T is in the hands of One who knows best."

Bagby went to the door. "The Assembly meets on the twenty-eighth," he remarked, "and I promised some of the members I'd quit Congress to'tend the early part of the session, so I've got to go back to Trenton in three days. If you change your mind before then, let me know."

"Oh, mommy," groaned the girl the moment the door closed, "I wish there were no such things in the world as lovers !" Then she told a yet greater untruth : "Or would that I had been born as plain as Tibbie's aunt !"

"T is ingratitude to speak thus, child. Hast already forgot the help Philemon tried to give us, and what we owe to Colonel Brereton ?"

The girl made no response for a little, then said hurriedly, "Mommy, dost think dad-da, and wouldst thou wish me to wed Colonel Brereton, provided 't would save us our lands and let us live in peace at Greenwood ?"

"I know not what to say, Janice. It would be a deliverance, indeed, from a future black with doubt and trouble ; but thy father holds to his promise to Philemon, and I question if he'd ever consent to have a rebel for a son-in-law. Nor do we know that Colonel Brereton was not but speaking in jest when he said what he did at Greenwood."

"He meant it, mommy," answered the daughter, "for — for

at grave risk he stole into Philadelphia last April to see me; and then he vowed he could save us from the Whigs if — if — ”

“ And wouldst thou wed him willingly? ” asked the mother, when Janice lapsed into silence with the sentence unfinished.

With eyes on the floor and cheeks all aflame, the girl answered: “ I — I scarce know, mommy. At times when I am with him I feel dreadfully excited and frightened — though never in the way I am with Lord Clowes — and want to get away; but the moment he is gone I — I wish him back, if only he would do but what I ’d have him — and yet I like him for — for having his own way — as he always does — though I know he ’d do mine if — if I asked him. ”

“ Janice, canst thou not speak less lightly and foolishly? ” chided Mrs. Meredith. “ If thou lovest the man, say so without such silly maunderings, which are most unbefitting of thy years. ”

“ But I — I don’t love Colonel Brereton, mommy, ” protested the girl; “ and I never could, after his — after knowing that he once gave his love to that — ”

“ And art thou so foolish, Janice, ” demanded her mother, “ as to pretend that thou dost not care for him? ”

“ Really it — it would only be for you and dadda, and to save the property, mommy, ” persisted Janice.

“ Then why didst thou draw back from Lord Clowes and Bagby? ” asked the mother, sternly.

“ But I — I could never have — have — Oh, mommy, there is a cart just stopped at the door, and I ’ll see what is wanted, ” — an excuse conveniently present for the flustered maiden to escape an explanation.

As it proved, the arrival of the cart was of very material moment, for by the time Janice was at the door a lean-visaged woman had been helped from it, and her salutation was anything but promising.

“ Who are you, that you are in my house? ” she demanded, and then entered the hall, and, womanlike, would not listen to the explanations that both Janice and her mother sought to make. “ Be off with you at once! ” she ordered. “ I ’ll not have you here a minute. My son died of fever and starvation in a freezing prison last winter while you made free of his mother’s home not a half-mile away. Be thankful I don’t have

you arrested for the rent, or hound the people into treating you Tory snakes as you deserve. No, you shall not stay to get your clothes; into the street I'll bundle them when I have got them together, and there you'll find them. Out with you!"

Janice was for obeying, but Mrs. Meredith refused positively to leave without packing. Hastily their scanty belongings were bestowed in the two little leathern trunks they had brought originally from Greenwood; these they dragged to the porch, and, sitting upon them, held debate as to their next step.

Ere they had been able to hit upon some escape from the nonplus, their attention was distracted by a rabble of men, women, and boys, who suddenly swept around a corner and flooded down the street toward them. With a premonition of coming evil, Janice sprang to the knocker, and rapped desperately, but their evictor paid no attention to the appeal. In a moment the mob, which numbered not less than a thousand people, reached the steps, hissing, hooting, and caterwauling, and from the din rose such cries as: "Tory, Tory!" "Turn-coats!" "Where are the bloody-backs?" "Ain't we draggle-tails now?"

"Order!" shouted a man in a cart pulled by some of the crowd, for which a way was made by all so that it could be wheeled up to the sidewalk opposite where the two women, holding each other's hands, were despairingly facing the crowd. "Remember, I passed my oath to General Arnold that there 'ud be no violence; an' if we don't keep it, the troops will be down on us, an' some on you will spend a night in the guard-house."

"Hooray!" cheered some one, and the mass echoed the cry.

The spokesman turned to the Merediths. "We know'd the Fourth o' July ain't no joyous day to you-alls, so we've done our bestest to keep you from thinkin' of it by bringin' some one to call on you. Ain't you glad to see again your old friend, Miss Shy Anna?"

As the speaker finished, he stepped to one side, bringing into view of the porch a woman seated upon the head of a barrel in the cart. A poor army drab, left behind in the evacuation, had been decked out in what Janice instantly recog-

nised as her Mischianza costume ; and with hair dressed so that it stood up not less than two feet above her forehead, splashed over with white paint, a drink-coloured face, doubly red in contrast, and bare feet, with an expanse of more than ankle in a similar nakedness below the trousers, she made up in all a figure so droll that under any other circumstances Janice would have laughed.

"We are escortin' Miss Shy Anna — who ain't really very shy — to see all her friends of The Blended Rose and of The Burning Mountain, an' as we hate airs an' pride, we demands that each give her a kiss. Just make a way for Miss Meredith to come and give her the chaste salute," he ordered of the throng.

"Thou wilt not insist on such a humiliation for my daughter," appealed Mrs. Meredith.

"Insult!" cried the leader. "Who dares to say 't ain't an honour to kiss one dressed in such clothes? Give the miss a little help, boys, but gently. Don't do her no harm."

A dozen men were through the gate before the sentence was finished, but outcries and a surge of the mob at this point gave a new bent to the general attention. A horseman from the direction opposite to that from which the crowd had come was spurring, with little heed, through the mass, and the clamour and movement were due to the commotion he precipitated.

In twenty seconds the rider, who was well coated with dust, and whose horse was lathered with the sweat of fast riding, had come abreast of the cart, and Janice gave a cry of joy. "Oh, Colonel Brereton," she called, "save us, I beg!"

"What are you about?" demanded the new-comer, sternly, of the crowd.

"We're celebratin' independence," explained he in the cart, "and all we wants of this miss is that she buss her friend Miss Shy Anna. They both is British sympathisers."

"Be off with you, every doodle and rag-tail of you!" ordered the officer, angrily.

"And who are you?" demanded one; and another, emboldened by distance, recommended, "Pull him off his horse."

Twenty hands seized hold of Brereton; but as they did so,

the aide, realising his mistake, retrieved it by a sudden change of manner. "I am an aide of General Washington," he shouted, "and I bring news of a great battle."

An uproar of questions broke out, drowning every other sound, till, by raising his hand, the aide procured silence.

"I must carry the despatches to Congress; but come with me, and I'll give you the tale the moment they are safe delivered."

With a rush the crowd followed him, as he moved forward, deserting the cart and its occupants, who hastily descended, and hurried after the throng. But Jack was not so forgetful, and turning in his saddle, he called back, "I'll return as soon as I can."



XLIX

PLATO *vs.* CUPID

THE patience of the two homeless women was heavily taxed before Brereton returned, but finally, after nearly two hours' waiting, he came, almost running along the street.

"Neither the Congress nor the populace were to be put off," he began to explain, ere he was within the gate, "and I have had to retail again and again the story of the fight, and tell 'how our army swore in Flanders.' But I dared not break away from them through fear they would follow me back and force me to play hare to their hounds once more. 'T is a great relief to know that you are safe," Jack declared, as he shook their hands warmly.

"Thanks to you," replied Mrs. Meredith. "'T was indeed a mercy of God that thou cam'st when thou didst."

"Pray give my mare, who has done her seventy miles since daylight, some share," laughed the officer, heartily.

"Oh, Colonel Brereton, what do we not owe to you?" exclaimed Janice, warmly.

A few words told their champion of their plight and stirred him to hot anger.

"By heavens!" he growled; "I would that my general were here to curse the beldame, as he did Lee at Monmouth. Once you are cared for, I'll return and see that she hear one's man's opinion of her. Follow me, and I'll soon put you in comfort." Getting a trunk on each shoulder, he set off down the street.

"Did I understand thee aright in inferring that General Washington so far forgot himself as to use profane language?" asked Mrs. Meredith as they walked.

"Ay, *Laus Deo!*"

"I can't think of him as doing that," ejaculated Janice.

"'T was glorious to hear him, for he spoke with righteous anger as an angel from heaven might, and his every word was well deserved. Indeed, had I been in command, Lee should have had a file of soldiers before sundown for his conduct."

"What did he?"

"Everything that an honourable man should not," answered the aide, warmly. "Finding that Gates had lost favour with Congress, and had failed in his attempt to supplant Washington, he at once resumed his old intriguing. But, worse still, once we were across the Delaware and in full cry after the British, he persisted in the Council of War in asserting that 't would be madness to bring on a general engagement, and that we should keep at a comfortable distance and merely annoy them by detachment, — counsel that would have done credit to the most honourable Society of Midwives, and to them only, and which could mean naught but that he did not wish my general to reap the glory of defeating the British. Voted down, my fine gentleman at first refused the command of the advance; but once he saw that the attack had promise of success, he asserted his claim as senior officer to command it, only, it would seem, with the object of preventing its success, for at the moment of going into action he predicted to Lafayette that our troops could not stand against the British, and instead of supporting those engaged, he allowed them to be thrown into confusion and was the first to join in the retreat which he himself had brought about. 'T was at this moment, when he was actually heading the rout, that my general cantered up to him and demanded, 'By God, sir, what is the meaning of this disorderly retreat?' Lee began a stuttering explanation that did n't explain, so his Excellency repeated his question. 'You know that the attack was contrary to my advice and opinion,' stammered Lee, and then Washington thundered out, 'Then you should not have insisted on the command. You're a damned poltroon!' And 't was what the whole army thought and wanted said."

"'T is too bad General Washington was beat," sighed Janice.

"That he was not," answered Brereton, triumphantly. "When we rode up, not a one of us but thought the day lost, but the general, with a quickness and decision I never before

saw in him, grasped the situation, rallied the broken regiments, seized on a strong piece of ground, and not merely checked the British advance, but drove them back on their reserves, where, after nightfall, they were glad enough to sneak away, leaving their wounded and dead behind them. But for Lee's cowardice, or treachery, as I believe it to be, they'd have never reached the protection of their fleet at Sandy Hook. Yet one benefit of his conduct will be that 't will end all talk of making him commander-in-chief. In seeking to injure his Excellency, he has but compassed his own discrediting, and the cabal against my general in Congress will break down for very lack of a possible successor. We did more than beat the English at Monmouth."

The tale served to bring the trio to the City tavern, where Brereton led the way at once to a room on the second floor, and deposited the two trunks.

"You 'll have no more than time to freshen yourselves for dinner, and we 'll leave talk till we 've eaten that," he suggested, as he picked up a pair of saddlebags and left the room.

"Oh, mommy," sighed Janice, rejoicingly, "isn't it a relief to be told what to do, and not have to worry one's self? He did n't make us think once."

Their self-chosen guardian was equally decisive as to the future, when the subject was taken up after the meal. "I must stay here two days for some despatches Congress wishes me to bear, and 't is fortunate, for I shall have time to procure a second horse and a pillion, so that you may journey with me."

"Whither?"

"To Brunswick."

"I suppose there is naught else left for us," said Mrs. Meredith, doubtingly, "but we have little reason to feel secure there."

"Do not give yourself a moment's discomposure or dolour. We shall find the army there ; but, better still, I possess a means to secure your safety, whether it remains or no."

"And what is that?" inquired Mrs. Meredith, eagerly, while Janice, feeling her cheeks begin to burn, suddenly sprang to her feet, with a pretended interest in something to be seen from one of the windows, which enabled her to turn her back to the table.

"By good luck I have a hold over both Esquire Hennion and Bagby, and I'll threat them that unless they let you live at peace I'll use it."

Janice came back to the table. "'T was only the rounds," she remarked with a note of half surprise, half puzzlement, in her voice, which was not lost to her mother's ears.

"Art thou as sure as thou wert, Janice," Mrs. Meredith asked, once they were in their room again, "that Colonel Brereton wishes to wed thee?"

"I — I thought — he said he did," replied the girl, hanging her head with mortification; "but he may have changed his mind."

"I fear me, child, that thy vanity, which has ever led thee to give too much heed to the pretty speeches of men, has misled thee in this instance."

Janice's doubt grew in the next two days, for by not a word or act did the aide even hint that such a hope was present in his thoughts. Their every need was his care, and all his spare time was passed in their company; but his manner conveyed only the courtesy of the friend, and never the tenderness of the lover. Even when the maiden presented him with the silk purse to which she had given so many hours of toil, his thanks, though warm, were distinctly platonic. Both piqued and humiliated at his conduct, the girl was glad enough when, on the morning of the third day, they set out on their journey, and she almost welcomed the advent of Bagby, who overtook them as they were taking their noon baiting at Bristol, and who made the afternoon ride with them.

Another familiar face greeted them, as, toward nightfall, they rode into Trenton and drew rein in front of the Drinkers' house, whither the ladies had asked to be taken; for ere Janice had been lifted from the horse's back, or Mrs. Meredith had descended from the pillion, they were accosted by Squire Hennion.

"I hoped ez haow we wuz well quit of yer," he began; "an' yer need n't 'spect, after all yer goin's on, an' those of yer — ole Tory husband, thet ye're goin' ter be allaowed ter come back ter Greenwood. I persume Joe's told yer thet he an' I is goin' ter git a bill through this Assembly declarin' yer lands escheated."

"You have n't any right to talk for me, squire," protested Joe. "I can do my own talking; and my sympathies is always with the female sex."

"He, he!" snickered Hennion. "Ain't we doin' the gallant all of a suddint! An' ain't we foxy? Joe, here," he continued, turning to the ladies, "come ter me jest afore we left Brunswick, with a bill he'd draw'd ter take yer lands, an' he says ter me he wuz a-goin' ter push it through Assembly. But by the time we gits ter Trenton, word come that the redcoats wuz a scutlin' fer York, so Joe he set off like a jiffy ter see, I presume, if yer wuz ter be faound. Did he offer ter buy yer lands cheap, or did he ask ter be bought off? Or is the sly tyke snoopin' araound arter yer darter?"

Bagby had the grace to grow a brick red at this revelation and home thrust, and he began an attempted explanation. But Brereton, who had helped both his charges to the ground, did not let them give ear to it. "I will bide at the tavern, and we'll start to-morrow as soon after daybreak as we can," he said, as he escorted them to the door, then turned back to the two assemblymen, who were busy expressing frank opinions of each other. "Quarrel as you like," he broke in, "but understand one thing now. That bill must never be introduced, or the pair of you shall hear from me. I warn you both that I have in my possession your signed oaths of allegiance to King George, and if you dare to push your persecution of the Merediths I'll ride from one end of Middlesex County to t' other, and prove to your constituents what kind of Whigs you are, over your own hands and seals." He took the two bridles and walked toward the tavern.

"Thet 'ere is a lie!" cried Hennion, yet following the officer.

"It is, if you never signed such a paper," remarked Jack, drily.

"I defy yer ter show it," challenged Hennion.

"If you want sight of it, introduce the bill," retorted the aide.

"Say, colonel," said Bagby, with a decided cringe, "you won't use those documents against your old friends, will you?"

"T ain't fer a Continental officer ter injure them ez is ginacine

Whigs," chimed in Hennion, "an' only swore an oath cuz it seemed bestest jest then."

"If you don't want those papers known, stop persecuting the Merediths."

"So thet gal's caught yer, too, hez she? Look aout fer them. They'll use yer ter save theer lands, an' then they'll send yer ter right-abaout, like they done with my Phil. I warns yer agin 'em, an' ef yer don't listen ter me, the day'll come when yer'll rue it."

Meanwhile the Drinkers had made the new arrivals most welcome; and the two girls, with so much to tell each other, found it difficult to know where to begin. They had not talked long, however, when Janice became conscious that there was a rift in the lute.

"My letter," she said, "would have told you better than ever I now can all about the routs and the plays, and everything else; but, alas! some one broke into our house the night the British left Philadelphia, and search as I would the next day, I could not find what I had written you."

"I should think thee'd be glad," replied Tibbie; "for surely thou'rt ashamed of having been so Toryish."

"Not I," denied Janice. "And why should I be?"

"Shame upon thee, Janice Meredith, for liking the enemies of thy country!"

"And pray, madam," questioned Janice, "what has caused this sudden fervour of Whigism in you?"

"I never was unfaithful to my country, nor smiled on its persecutors."

"Humph!" sniffed Janice. "One would think, to hear you talk, that you have given those smiles to some rebel lover."

"Better a Whig lover than one of your popinjay British officers," retorted Tibbie, crimsoning.

"Gemini!" burst from the other. "I believe 't is a hit from the way you colour."

"And if 't was — which 't is not — 't is naught to feel ashamed of," resentfully answered the accused.

The two girls had been spatting thus in lowered voices on the sofa, and as Tibbie ended, her disputant's arm was about her waist, and she was squeezed almost to suffocation.

"Oh, Tibbie, wilt tell me all about it — and him — once we are in bed to-night?" begged Janice, in the lowest but most eager of whispers.

Whether this prayer would have been granted was not to be known, for as it was uttered Mr. Drinker interrupted their dialogue.

"Why, Tabitha," he called from across the room, "here 's a great miscarriage. Mrs. Meredith tells me that Colonel Brereton rode with them from Philadelphia, but thinking to o'ercrowd us he has put up at the Sun tavern."

Had the daughter merely remarked that "'T was a monstrous pity," or suggested that her father should at once set off to the hostel to insist on his coming to them, Janice would have thought nothing of the incident; but in place of this Tibbie said, "'T is well," with a toss of her head, even as she grew redder still, and realising this, she pretended that some supper preparation required her attention, and almost fled from the room.

"Colonel Brereton," explained Mr. Drinker, "stopped with us last summer each time he rode through Trenton on public business, and we came to like him much; so glad were we when he was well enough from his wound this spring to once more drop in upon us."

"His wound!" exclaimed Janice.

"Ay," said Miss Drinker. "Didst thee not know that he was hit at Whitemarsh, and was weeks abed?"

Mr. Drinker gave a hearty laugh as the girl shook her head in dissent. "I'll tell thee a secret, Jan," he said, "and give thee a fine chance to tease. There was a girl not a hundred miles from this house who was sorely wounded by that same British bullet, and who pilfered every goody she could find from our pantry, and would have it that I should ride myself to Valley Forge with them all, but that I found a less troublesome conveyance."

"'T was very good of her," said Janice, gravely. "I — I did not know that he had been wounded."

"Thou wert hardly in the way of it," replied Mr. Drinker. "British officers were scarce news sheets of our army."

However praiseworthy Miss Meredith may have thought her

friend's kindness to Brereton, one action conveyed the contrary import, for when the bed hour came she said to Tabitha: "I think I'll sleep with mommy, and not with thee, after all."

"Oh, Jan, and I have so much to tell thee!"

"We make so early a start," explained Miss Meredith, "that the sleep is more valuable to me." Then the girl, after a swallow, said: "And I thank you, Tibbie, for being so good to Colonel Brereton, to whom we owe much kindness; for even had we known he was injured, we could have done nothing for him." She kissed her friend and followed her mother.

When Brereton appeared the next morning, Janice mounted the horse which was to bear her while the aide was exchanging greetings with the Drinkers; and when these quickly changed into farewells, she heeded not Tabitha's protest that they had not kissed each other good-by.

"I thought to save time by mounting," explained Janice, "and for this once it does not matter." And during the whole morning's ride the aide found her strangely silent and unresponsive.

Both these qualities disappeared with marvellous suddenness once they were within the Greenwood gate. All along the Raritan the fields were dotted with tents and parks of artillery, and on Greenwood lawn stood a large marquee, from which floated the headquarters' flag, while groups of officers and soldiers were scattered about in every direction. But all this panoply of war was forgotten by the girl, as Sukey, who was carrying some dish from the house to the tent, dropped it with a crash on the ground, and with a screech of delight rushed forward. Janice slid, rather than alighted, from her horse; and as if there were no such things as social distinctions, mistress and slave hugged each other, both rendered inarticulate by their sobs of joy. Further to prove that hearts have nothing to do with the colour of the skin, Billy Lee, who had been following in Sukey's train with another dish, was so melted by the sight that he proceeded to deposit his burden of a large ham on the grass, and began a loud blubbering in sympathy. Their united outcries served to bring two more participants on the scene, for Peg and Clarion came running out of the house and with screams and yelps sought to express their joy.

While this spectacle was affording infinite amusement to the officers and sentinels, Brereton, after helping Mrs. Meredith alight, went in search of Washington and in a few moments returned with him.

"We have made free with your home, as you see, Mrs. Meredith," apologised the commander-in-chief, as he shook her hand, "and I scarce know now whether to bid you welcome, or to ask leave for us to tarry till to-morrow. May we not effect a compromise by your dining and supping with me, and, in return, your favouring me and my family with a night's lodging?"

"Thou couldst not fail of welcome for far longer, General Washington," said Mrs. Meredith, warmly, "but thou art doubly so if Lady Washington is with thee."

"Nay; I meant my military family," explained the general. "Mrs. Washington retreated, ere the campaign opened, to Mount Vernon." Then he turned to the daughter and shook her hand. "Ah, Miss Janice," he said, "sorry reports we've had of thy goings on, and we greatly feared we had lost thee to the cause."

"Ah, no, your Excellency," protested the girl. "Though I did once pray that the British should capture Philadelphia, 't was not because I wished you beaten, but solely because it would bring dad-da to us, and — and many a prayer I've made for you."

The general smiled. "'T will be glad news to some," he said, with a sidelong look at Brereton, "that thy sympathies have always been with us. I presume thou hast simply been doing the British soldiery all the harm that thou couldst under guise of friendliness. I'll warrant thou'st a greater tale of wounded officers than any of Morgan's riflemen, sharpshooters though they be."

"I would I could say I had been ever faithful, your Excellency, but I must own to fickleness."

"These are times that test loyalty to the full," replied Washington, "and there has been many a waverer in the land."

"Of that I know full well, your Excellency."

"Nay, Miss Meredith, thou needest not pretend that thou hast



“Then he turned to the daughter and shook her hand.”

any knowledge of inconstancy. From that particular failing of mankind I'll agree to hold thee harmless."

"Your Excellency but compliments me," answered Janice, "in presuming me exempt from forgetfulness." And as she spoke the girl gave an unconscious glance at Brereton.



L

ROSES AND HONEYSUCKLE

DINNER, which was actually being placed on the table in the tent at the moment the ladies arrived, cut short further conversation with either Washington or Sukey. Utterly forgetful of her duties to spit and oven, nothing would do the former cook but to follow Janice to her old room, where she summarily ordered Billy to clear out the clothing and accoutrements of its military tenants.

"Don't you stay, Sukey," said Janice, "if you are needed in the kitchen. His Excellency —"

"Dat I ain't, chile. Gin'l Washington he trabell wid his own cook, an' Peg an' I 'se only helpin' Mr. Lee set de table and carry de dishes. Now I help ma honey."

"Oh, Sukey," carolled Janice, "it *is* so good to be home again!"

"Guess Missus Sukey tink dat too," said William, halting in his labours. "She dun talk about nuthin' else but her pooty young missus."

"And how 's Blueskin, Billy?" questioned Janice.

"Lor' bless us, miss, dyar ain't no restrainin' ob dat steed wid de airs he put on since he dun took part at Monmouth an' hear the gin'l say what he tink ob dat feller Lee. I tell him if he doan behave better, de next time dyar's goin' to be a battle, I jus' saddle up Nelson an' leave him behind."

"Now youse stop a-talkin' an' tote dem men's tings some-whars else. Missy Janice gwine to change her gown, an' we doan want nuttin' ob dat sort in hyar."

"I'll only smart myself a little and not change my frock, Sukey, because —"

"Dat youse must, honey, for I dun praise youse so dat I ain't gwine to have dem disappointed in youse. Who'll be to dinner to-day, Mr. Lee?"

"Gen'l Greene an' Lord Sterlin', an' de staff, an' de field an' brigades major ob de day."

"Dere, chile, now doan youse depreciate yourself to all dem. Jus' youse put on de pootiest dress youse hab an' do ole Sukey proud." Then, as she helped Janice to bedeck herself, she poured out the story of their makeshift life, telling how, with what had been left of the poultry, and with the products of the small patch of the garden they had been able to till, the two slaves had managed to live the year through, taking the best care they could of their master's property, and hoping and praying daily for what had at last come to pass. The arraying would have been more speedy with the volunteer abigail out of the room; but not once did the mistress even suggest it, and, on the contrary, paused several times in the process to give the black a hug.

Finally, a call from her mother put an end to this frittering and hurried the girl downstairs. Washington gave his hand to Mrs. Meredith, and there was a contest of words among the numerous officers for the privilege of the girl's, till Lord Sterling asserted his prerogative of rank and carried her off. Her presence was indeed a boon to the twenty men who sat down at the table, and, accustomed as Janice was by this time to the attention of officers, she could not but be flattered by the homage and deference paid her, all the more, perhaps, that it was witnessed by Brereton. Nor did this cease with the withdrawal of the ladies, for a number of the younger blades elected for her society rather than for that of the bottle, and made themselves her escort in the tour of inspection which Janice insisted on making about the place; and had she needed to be helped or lifted over every fence, or even stone, they encountered, there would have been willing hands to do it. It is true she was teased not a little for her supposed British sympathies, but it was not done ill-naturedly, and the girl was now quick-witted and quick-tongued enough to protect herself.

This plurality of swains did not lessen as the afternoon advanced, for not one of the diners departed, and when tea-time had come, their ranks were swelled by a dozen new arrivals, giving both Mrs. Meredith and Janice all they could do to keep the assembly supplied with "dishes" of the cheerful but

uninebriating beverage which had been so material a cause in the very embodying of this army. Then the officers idled about the lawn, each perhaps hoping for an invitation to stay on to the supper which so quickly followed the tea-drinking ; and those who were fortunate enough to attain their wish did not hurry away once the meal was concluded. Only when Mrs. Meredith excused herself and her daughter on the ground of fatigue, did the youngsters recollect that there were camp duties which called them away.

"I fear me, Miss Janice," said the commander-in-chief, as the good-nights were being said, "that discipline would be maintained with difficulty were we long to remain encamped here. Personally, I cannot but regret that we move northward to-morrow ; but for the good of the service I think 't is fortunate."

Drum beat and bugle call, sounding reveille, brought Janice back to consciousness the next morning ; and it is to be suspected that she took some pains with her morning toilet, for by the time she descended tents were already levelled and regiments and artillery were filing past on the road.

"We have reason to believe that Sir Henry meditates a move up the Hudson against our post of West Point," Washington explained to Janice ; "and so it is our duty to put ourselves within protecting distance, though I myself think he will scarce venture a blow, the more that he is strengthening his lines about New York. 'T is not a little pleasing to us that, after two years' fighting and manœuvring, both armies are brought back to the very point they set out from, and that from being the attacking party, the British are now reduced to the use of spade and pick-axe for defence."

"I wish you were not leaving us, your Excellency," sighed Janice.

"'T is one of the penalties of war," replied the general, "that we are doomed to see little of the fair sex, and must be content with an occasional sip of their society. Should we winter near here, as now seems possible, I trust you will honour Mrs. Washington and myself with your company at headquarters. And one word ere we part, Mrs. Meredith. You must not think that we make free with people's property, as we seem to have done in your case. Finding your home unoccu-

pied, I made bold to take it for my headquarters ; but the quartermaster-general will pay you before we leave for such use as I have made of it."

"We could not accept anything, your Excellency," protested the hostess. "The obligation is with us, and I beg—"

"Be off with you to your stations, gentlemen," ordered Washington, as he rose from the table ; and having cleared the room, he continued : "Nay, Mrs. Meredith, Congress allows me my expenses, and 't is only just that you should be paid. And however well provided you may be, a little ready money will surely not be amiss?"

"Your Excellency is more thoughtful of our future than we are ourselves," responded Mrs. Meredith. "For a moment I had forgot our position ; we will gladly accept payment."

"Would that I could as easily pay you for the pleasure you have given me," said the general, shaking her hand. "Miss Janice, we'll do our best," he went on, "to tie the British soldiery into New York ; but, whether we succeed or no, I wish to hear of no more philandering with their officers. 'T is hard enough to fight them in the field, without encountering them in our softer moments ; so see to it that you save your smiles and blushes for us."

"I will, your Excellency," promised Janice, as she did both.

"Nay, nay, my child," he corrected, smiling. "I did not mean that thou shouldst blush and smile for me. I am a married man, and old enough to be thy father."

"'T is fortunate you are the first, your Excellency," laughed the girl in turn, "or the latter should not protect you." And as the general held out his hand she impulsively kissed it.

"I shall write Mrs. Washington that 't will never do for her to leave me during another campaign," replied the commander, reciprocating the salute. "Not but she will be very proud to think that so charming a maid honours her husband with such favours."

At the door the staff were already mounted and waiting their chief. Farewells were completed with all save Brereton, who for some reason had withdrawn a little from the group ; and these done, the cavalcade trotted off.

No sooner was it upon the road than Brereton spurred up

alongside of his superior, and, saluting, said in a dropped voice : "Your Excellency, I had something of moment to say to the Merediths, but 't was impossible to get private word, with all the idlers and rackets and Jack-a-dandies of the army running in and out upon them. May I not turn back? I will overtake you ere many hours."

"Think you, sir," asked Washington, gravely, "I have no occasion for my aides, that you make such a request?"

Jack flushed with mortification and temper. "I supposed that, on the march, you could spare —"

"I can, my boy," interrupted the commander-in-chief, with a change of manner, "and was but putting off a take-in on you. My own courting was done while colonel of the First Virginia regiment, and well I remember how galling the military duties were. 'T is to be feared I was not wholly candid in the reasons calling me from the regiment to Williamsburg, that I alleged to my superiors, for my business at the capital took few hours, and both going and returning I managed to stay many at 'White House.' May your wooing speed as prosperously," he finished, extending an arm and pressing his junior's hand warmly. "And if by chance you should not overtake us till to-morrow, I'll think of twenty years ago and spare you a reprimand."

"God save you, sir!" exclaimed Jack, in an undertone of gratitude. "I — I love — She is — is so dear to me, that I could not bear the thought of waiting." Wheeling his horse, the rider gave him the spur.

The moment the general and staff had trotted away, Mrs. Meredith turned to her daughter and asked, "Hast thou refused Colonel Brereton, Janice?"

"No, mommy," faltered the girl.

"Then why did he ride off without a word to either of us?"

"I — 't is — I can only think that — that he has come to care for Tibbie — being in and out of love easily — and so is ashamed of the part he has played."

"'T is evident that I was right in my view that thy vanity had misled thee," replied the mother. "But we'll not discuss its meaning now, for I must find out how we stand. Try to make thyself a task, child."

Her search for this took the maiden, closely followed by

Clarion, to the garden, where she found that weeds, if nothing else, had thriven, though the perennials still made a goodly show. Before beginning a war on the former, she walked to a great tangle of honeysuckle that clustered about and overtopped a garden seat, to pluck a bunch and stick it in the neckerchief that was folded over her bosom ; then she went to her favourite rose-bush and kissed the one blossom July had left to it. "I'll not pick you," she said, "since you are the only one."

The sound of galloping caught her attention as she raised her head ; and though she could not see the rider, her ears told her that he turned into Greenwood gate, even before the pace was slackened. Not knowing what it might bode, the girl stood listening, with an anxious look on her face. The cadence of the hoof-beats ended suddenly, and silence ensued for a time ; then as suddenly, quick footsteps, accompanied by a tell-tale jingle and clank, came striding along the path from the kitchen to the port in the hedge. One glance Janice gave at the opposite entrance, as if flight were in her thoughts, then, with a hand resting on the back of the seat to steady herself, she awaited the intruder.

Brereton paused in the opening of the box, as his eyes rested on his love. "Would to Heaven," he exclaimed, "that I had my colours and the time to paint you as you stand !"

Both relieved and yet more frightened, Janice, in an attempt to conceal the latter feeling, remarked, "I thought you had departed, sir."

"Think you I'd rest content without farewell, or choose to have one with the whole staff as witnesses?" answered Jack, as he came forward. "Furthermore, I had some matters of which to speak that were not to be published to the world."

"Mommy is —"

"Where I'd have her," interjected the officer ; "for what I have to say is to you. First : I put the screws on old Hennion and Bagby, and have their word that they will not push their forfeiture bill, or in any other way molest you."

"We thank you deeply, Colonel Brereton."

"I rode to Brunswick and saw Parson McClave yesterday afternoon, to bespeak his aid, and he says he is certain you may live at peace here, if you will not seek to be rigorous with

your tenants, and that he will do his best to keep the community from persecuting you."

"'T is glad news, indeed."

"Knowing how you were circumstanced, I then rode about your farms and held interview with a number of your tenants and pleaded with them that they pay a part of their arrears in supplies ; and several of the better sort gave me their word that you should not want for food."

"'T was most thoughtful of you."

"Finally, I wrote a letter to your father, and have sent it under a flag that was going to New York, telling him that you were safe arrived at Greenwood."

"Ah, Colonel Brereton, how can we ever repay your kindness?" murmured the girl, her eyes brightened and softened by a mist of unshed tears.

"'T was done for my own ease. Think you I could have ridden away, not knowing what risk or privation you might have to suffer in my absence?"

"'T is only the greater cause for gratitude that you make your ease depend on ours."

"That empties my packet of advices," said the aide ; "and — and — unless you have something to tell me, I'll — we'll say a farewell and I'll rejoin the army."

"Would that I could thank you, sir, as you deserve ; but words mean so little that you have rendered me dumb," replied Janice, feelingly.

"Can you not — Have you nothing else to say to me?" he begged pleadingly.

"I — Indeed, I can think of nothing, Colonel Brereton," replied the maiden, very much flustered.

"Then good-by, and may God prosper you," ended Jack, sadly, taking her hand and kissing it gently. He turned with obvious reluctance, and went toward the house, but before he had reached the hedge he quickly retraced his steps. "I — I could not force my suit upon you when I found you in such helplessness — not even when you gave me the purse — though none but I can know what the restraint meant in torture," he burst out ; "and it seems quite as ungenerous to try to advantage myself now of your moment's gratefulness. But my passion

has its limits of control, and go I cannot without — without — Give me but a word, though it be a sentence of death to my heart's desire."

Janice, whose eyes had been dropped groundward during most of this colloquy, gave the pleader a come-and-go glance, then said breathlessly, "I — 'T is — Wha — wha — What would you wish me to say?"

"What you can," cried the officer, impetuously.

"I — I would — 'T is my desire to — to say what you would have me."

Both her hands were eagerly caught in those of the suppliant. "If you could — If — 'T would be everything on earth — more than life itself to me — could you but give me the faintest hope that I might win you. Have you such an abhorrence of me that you cannot give me the smallest guerdon of happiness?"

"You err in supposing that I dislike you," protested Janice.

"Then why do you refuse all that is dearest to me? Why turn from a devotion that would make your happiness its own?"

"But I have n't," denied the girl, her heart beating wildly and her breath coming quickly.

As the words passed her lips, she was impulsively yet tenderly caught in her lover's arms and drawn to him. "What have you done, then?" he demanded almost fiercely.

"I — I — oh! I don't know," she gasped.

"Then, as you have pity in you, grant my prayer?"

For a moment Janice, with down-bent head, was silent. Then she raised her eyes to Jack's and said, "I will marry you, Colonel Brereton, if dadda will let me."



LI

A FAREWELL AND A WELCOME

THERE was little weeding of the garden that forenoon, unless the brushing off with Jack's gauntlets of some green moss from the garden seat, about which clustered the honeysuckle, can be considered such. Possibly this was done that more sprays of the vine might be plucked, for when Sukey, after repeated calls from the entry, finally came to summon them to dinner, Jack had a bunch of it, and a single rose, thrust in his sword knot.

There was a pretence of affected unconsciousness at the meal on the part of the three, and even of Peg, though the servant made it difficult to maintain the fiction by several times going off into fits of reasonless giggles not easy for those at table to ignore. The repast eaten, Brereton drew Mrs. Meredith aside for a word, and Janice took advantage of the freedom to escape to her room, where she buried her face in the pillow, as if she had some secret to confide to it.

From this she was presently roused by her mother's entrance, and as the girl, with flushed cheeks and questioning look, met her eyes, Mrs. Meredith said: "I think, my child, thou hast acted for the best, and we will hope thy father will think so."

"Oh, mommy, dost think he'll consent?"

"I fear not, but that must be as God wills it. Go down now, for Colonel Brereton says he must ride away, and only tarries for a word with thee."

Janice gave one glance at the mirror, and put her hands to her hair, with a look of concern. "'Tis dreadfully disordered."

"He will not notice it, that I'll warrant," prophesied the matron.

With his horse's bridle over his arm, the lover was waiting for her on the front porch. "Will you not walk with me down the road a little way?" he begged. "'T is so hard to leave you."

"I—I think I had better not," urged the girl, showing trepidation. "'T would surely delay you too—"

"Ah, Janice," interrupted the lover, "why—what have I done that you should show such fear of me?"

"I'm not afraid of you," denied Janice, hurriedly; "and of course I'll go, if—if you think it best."

"Then what is it frightens you, sweetheart?" persisted Jack, as they set off.

The maiden scrutinised the ground and horizon as if seeking an explanation ere she replied shyly, "'T is—'t is indeed no fear of you, but you—you never ask permission."

The officer laughed exultingly. "Then may I put my arm about you?" he requested.

"'T will make walking too difficult."

"How know you that?" demanded Jack.

"'T is—'t is easily fancied."

Brereton's free arm encircled the girl. "Try to fancy it," he entreated. "And never again say that I do not ask permission."

A mile down the road Jack halted. "I'll not let you go further," he groaned; "nor must I linger, for reminder of my wound still troubles me if I ride too quick."

"Why did you not tell me you had been wounded when you took me away from the ball?" asked Janice, reproachfully.

"'T was not once in my thoughts that evening, nor was anything else save you."

"I can make all sorts of preserves and jellies and pickles, and next winter I'll send you some to camp."

"That you shall not," asserted the aide; "for the day we go into winter quarters sees me back here to dance at your wedding."

"Hadst better wait till thou art invited, sir?" suggested Janice, saucily.

"What? A revolt on my hands already!" exclaimed the officer.

"T is you are the rebel."

"Then you are my prisoner," retorted Jack, catching her in his arms.

"You Whigs are a lawless lot!"

"Toward avowed Tories, ay—and a good serve-out to them."

"But I gave my word to his Excellency that from henceforth I'd be Whiggish, so you've no right to treat me as one."

"Then I'll not," agreed the lover. "And since I plundered from you while you were against us, 't is only right that I should return what I took." He kissed her thrice tenderly. "Good-by, my sweet," he said, and, releasing her, mounted. "'T is fortunate I depend not on my own legs, for they'd never consent to carry me away from you." He started his horse, but turned in his saddle to call back: "'T will not be later than the first of November, with or without permission," and throwing a last kiss with his hand, spurred away.

Till Jack passed from view, the girl's eyes followed him; then, with a look of dreaminess in her eyes, she walked slowly back to Greenwood, so abstracted by her thoughts that she spoke not a word to the attendant hound.

Whatever might be the inclination of the girl, her mother gave her little chance to dream in the next few days. Not merely was there much about house and garden to be brought into order, but Mrs. Meredith succeeded in bargaining their standing crop of grass in exchange for a milch cow, and to Janice was assigned both its milking and care, while the chickens likewise became her particular charge. From stores in the attic the mother produced pieces of whole cloth, and Janice was set at work on dresses and underclothes to resupply their depleted wardrobes. Not content with this, Mrs. Meredith drew from the same source unspun wool and unhatched flax, and the girl was put to spinning both into thread and yarn, that Peg might weave them into cloth, against the need of winter. From five in the morning till eight at night there was occupation for all; and so tired was the maiden that she gladly enough heard her mother's decree that their small supply of candles should not be used, but that they should go to bed with the sun.

They were thus already asleep by ten o'clock one August evening, when there came a gentle knocking on the back door, which, after several repetitions, ceased, but only to be resumed a moment later on the front one. Neither summons receiving any attention, a succession of pebbles were thrown against Janice's window, finally bringing the sleeper back to wakefulness. Her first feeling, as she became conscious of the cause, was one of fear, and her instinct was to pay no attention to the outsider. After one or two repetitions, however, of the disquieting taps, she stole to the window, and, keeping herself hidden, peeped out. All she could see was a man standing close to a shrub, as if to take advantage of its concealment, who occasionally raised an arm and tossed a pebble against the panes. Really alarmed, the girl was on the point of seeking her mother, when her eyes took in the fact that Clarion was standing beside the cause of her fright, and seeking, so far as he could, to win his attention. Reassured, the girl raised the sash, and instantly her father's voice broke upon her ears.

"Down with ye, Jan," he said, "and let me get under cover."

Both anxious and delighted, the girl ran downstairs and unbarred the door.

"I had begun to fear me that I had been misinformed and that ye and your mother were not hereabout," the squire began; "so 't is indeed a joy to find ye safe." And then, after Mrs. Meredith had been roused, he explained his presence. "Though I could not get back to ye in Philadelphia, no worry I felt on your account, making sure that Lord Clowes would look to your safety. An anxious week I had after the army reached New York, till I received Colonel Brereton's letter telling me of your safety, though that only assured me as to the past, and I knew that any moment the rascally Whigs might take to persecuting ye again."

"Nay, Lambert," said Mrs. Meredith, "not a one has offered us the slightest annoyance. On the contrary, some of thy tenants have tendered us food in payment of rent, though I own that they insist upon hard bargains."

"I would I had a little complaint to make," responded the husband. "No sooner did Clinton reach New York than my

appointment was taken from me, and but for Phil's kindness I should like to have starved. Though with little money himself, the boy would let me want for nothing, and but for him I should not even have been able to be here to-night."

"How was that, dad-da?" asked Janice.

"'Tis not to be whispered outside, Jan, but some of these same rebel Jerseymen — ay, and the Connecticut Yankees — much prefer the ring of British guineas to the bristle of the worthless paper money of the Whigs, so almost nightly boat-loads of provisions and forage steal out of the Raritan for New York, but for which the British army would be on short commons. Phil, who knew of this traffic, secured me passage on one of the empty boats."

"Then the villagers know thou hast returned?" exclaimed Mrs. Meredith, anxiously.

"Not they, for those in the business are as little anxious to have it known they have been in New York as I am to have it advertised that I am here at Greenwood, and there is little danger that either of us will blab."

"Had Lord Clowes arrived in New York, Lambert?" inquired Mrs. Meredith.

"That he had, and in a mighty dudgeon he was at first against all of us : with ye for what he took offence at in Philadelphia, and with me because I hold to my promise to Phil. But when he had word that I was coming here, he sought me out in a great turn-over, and said if I brought ye back to New York his house should be at our service, and that we should want for nothing. There is no doubt, lass, that he loves ye prodigious."

The girl shivered, August night though it was, but merely exclaimed, "You'd not think of making us go to New York when we are under no necessity?"

"Not I, now that I know ye to be well off, which I feared ye were not. The nut to crack is to know whether I hadst best find safety by returning to New York, to live like a pauper on Phil, or seek to lie hid here for a three-months."

"And why three months, Lambert?" asked his wife.

"'Tis thought that will serve to bring about a peace. Have ye not heard how this much-vaunted alliance with France has

resulted? The French fleet and soldiers, united to a force under Sullivan, attempted to capture the British post at Newport, but oil and vinegar would not mix. The Parley-voos wanted to monopolise all the honour by having the Americans play second fiddle to them, but to this they'd not consent; and while the two were quarrelling over it, like dogs over a bone, in steps the British, drubs the two of them, and carries off the prize. That gone, they've set to quarrelling as to whose fault it was. The feeling now is as bitter against the French as 't was against the British, and 't is thought that with this end to their hopes from the frog-eaters, they'll be glad enough to make a peace with us, the more that their paper money, the only thing that has kept them going this long, loses value daily, and they will soon have nothing with which to pay bills and soldiers."

"Thou hadst best stay here, Lambert," advised Mrs. Meredith. "'T will be more comfortable for thee, and far happier for us."

"Remember that I run the risk of capture, wife."

"Thou canst be kept concealed from all but Peg and Sukey, who are as faithful as we."

"And I am sure if by chance you were discovered," suggested Janice, haltingly, "that Colonel Brereton would — would — save you from ill treatment."

"Colonel Brereton?"

"Ay, Lambert," spoke up Mrs. Meredith, as her daughter looked appealingly to her. "There is something yet to be told, which has won us a strong friend who would never permit thee to suffer. Colonel Brereton, to whom we owe all our present safety, has declared his attachment to Janice, and seeks her —"

"Small doubt he has," derisively interjected the squire. "I make certain that every rebel, seeing the game drawing to a close, is seeking to feather his nest."

"Nay, Lambert. 'T is obvious he truly loves our —"

"He may, but it shall not help him to her or her acres," again interrupted the father. "The impudence of these Whigs passes belief. I hope ye sent him off with a bee in his breeches, Matilda."

"That we did not," denied Mrs. Meredith. "Nor wouldst thou, hadst thee been with us to realise all his goodness to us."

"Well, well," grumbled the father, resignedly, "I suppose if the times are such that we must accept favours of the rebels, we must not resent their insults. But 't is bitter to think of our good land come to such a pass that rogues like this Brereton and Bagby should dare obtrude their suits upon us."

"Oh, dadda," protested Janice, pleadingly, "'t was truly no insult he intended, but the — the highest — he spoke as if — as if — There was a tender respect in his every word and action, as if I might have been a queen. And I could not — Oh, mommy, please, please, tell it for me!"

"'T is best thou shouldst know at once, Lambert, that Janice favours his wooing."

"What!" roared the squire, looking incredulously from mother to daughter, and then, as the latter nodded her head, he cried, "I'll not believe it of ye, Jan, however ye may wag your pate. Wed a bondman! Have ye forgot your old pledge to me? Where's your pride, child, that ye should even let the thought occur to ye?"

"But he is well born, dadda, far better than we ourselves, for he told me once that his great-grandfather was King of England," cried the girl, desperately.

"And ye believed the tale?"

"He would not lie to *me*, dadda, I am sure."

"Why think ye that?"

"Oh — he never — loving me, he never — can't you understand? He'd not deceive me, dadda."

"Ye 're the very one he would, ye mean, and small wonder he takes advantage of ye if ye talk as foolishly to him as to me. Have done with all thought of the fellow and of his clankers concerning his birth. Whate'er he was, he is to-day a run-away bondservant and —"

"But, dadda, he is now a lieutenant-colonel and —"

"Of what? Where's the honour in being in command of the riff-raff of the land? Dost not know that the most of their officers are made out of tapsters and tinkers and the like? Does it make a tavern idler or a bankrupt the less of either, that a pack of dunghills choose to dub him by another title? Once

peace and law are come again, this same scalawag Brereton, or Fownes, or whatever he will then be, must return to my service and fulfil his bond, with a penalty of double time to boot. Proud ye'd be to see your spouse ordered to field or stable work every morning by my overseer!"

"'T would grieve me, dad-da," replied the girl, gently, "because I know how proud he is, and how it would make him suffer; but 't would not lessen my respect or — or affection for him."

"What?" snorted Mr. Meredith once more. "Dost mean to tell me that thy heart is in this?"

"I — indeed, dad-da," stammered Janice, colouring, "until — until this moment I thought 't was only for yours and mommy's sakes — though at times puzzled by — by I know not what — but now —"

"Well, out with it!" ordered the squire, as his daughter hesitated.

Janice faltered, then hurried to where her father sat, and, throwing herself on her knees, buried her face in his waistcoat. Something she said, but very sharp ears it needed to resolve the muffled sounds into the words, "Oh, dad-da, I'm afraid that I care for him more than I thought."

"What!" for a third time demanded Mr. Meredith. "'T is not possible I hear ye aright, girl. Why, a nine-months ago ye were beseeching me, with your arms about my neck, to fulfil my word to Phil."

"But that was because I feared Lord Clowes," eagerly explained Janice, with her face withdrawn from its screen; "and then I did not love — or at least did not dream that I did."

"Pox me, but I believe Clowes is right when he says the sex are without stability," growled the squire, irascibly. "Put this fellow out of your thoughts, and remember that ye were promised long since."

"Oh, dad-da, I want to be dutiful, and obedient I promise to be, but you would not have me marry with my heart given elsewhere. You could not be so cruel or —"

"Cease such bibble-babble, Jan. 'T is for your own good I am acting. Not merely is this fellow wholly beneath ye in birth and fortune, besides a rebel to our king, but there are facts

about him of which ye have not cognisance that should serve to rouse your pride."

"What?"

"What say ye to an intimacy twixt this same Brereton and Mrs. Loring?"

With the question the girl was on her feet, yet with down-hung head. "He—I know he does not care for her," she declared.

"Ye know nothing of the kind," retorted the squire. "I bear in my pocket a letter from her to him of so private a nature that she would not trust it to a flag, because then it must be read, which Lord Clowes brought to me with the request that I would in some way smuggle it to him."

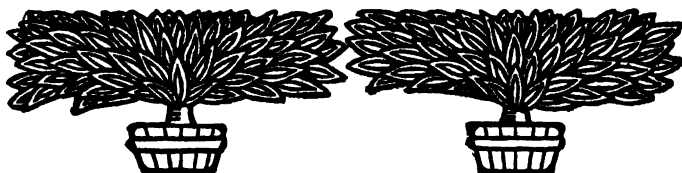
"That means little," said Janice.

"And what say ye to his meeting her in New York, for that is the purpose of her letter to him?"

"How know you that?" cried Janice.

"Because she writ on the outside that the commander at Paulus Hook had been sent orders to pass him to New York."

"That proves no wrong on his part," answered the girl, her head proudly erect. "Nor will I believe any of him." And without further words she went from the room. But though she went to bed, she tossed restless and wakeful till the sun rose.



LII

SCANT WELCOME FOR MAN AND BEAST

THE concealment of the master of Greenwood proved an easy affair, for it was now the harvest season and the neighbouring farmers were far too engaged by their own interests to have thought of anything else, while the four miles was distance sufficient to deter the villagers from keeping an eye on the daily household life. For their own comfort, a place of concealment was arranged for the squire in the garret behind the big loom ; but thus assured of a retreat, he spent his time on the second floor, his only precautions being to avoid the windows in daylight hours and to keep Clarion at hand to give warning of any interloper.

In the next few days Mrs. Meredith twice reverted to the subject of their midnight discussion, but each time only to find her husband unyieldingly persistent that Janice was pledged to Philemon, and that if this bar did not exist, he would never countenance Brereton's suit. As for the girl, she shunned all allusion to the matter, taking refuge in a proud silence.

In September an unexpected event brought the difficulty to a crisis. One evening, after the work of the day was over, as they sat in Mrs. Meredith's room, waiting for the dusk to deepen enough for beds to become welcome, a creak of the stairs set all three to listening, and brought Clarion to his feet. Though no repetition of the sound followed, the dog, after a moment's attention, dashed out of the room and was heard springing and jumping about, with yelps betokening joyful recognition of some one. Reassured by this, yet wishing to know more, Janice hurried into the hall. Coming from the half-light, it was too dark for her to distinguish anything, so she was forced to grope her way to the stairs ; but other eyes

were keener, and Janice, without warning, was encompassed by a man's arms, which drew her to him that his lips might press an eager kiss upon hers.

"Who is it?" whispered the pilferer, after the theft.

"Oh, Colonel Brereton!" exclaimed the girl, in an undertone; "I knew at once, but —"

"Forgive me if I frightened you, sweetheart," begged the officer, softly. "I could not resist the impulse to surprise you, and so tied my horse down the road a bit, that I might steal in upon you unawares."

"But what brings you?" questioned the girl, anxiously.

Brereton, with a touch of irritation, answered: "And you can ask? Even my vanity is forced to realise you waste little love on me that you need explanation. Sixty miles and over I have rid to-day solely that I might bide the night here, and not so much as a word of welcome do you give me. But I vow you shall love me some day even as I love you; that you too shall long for sight of me when I am away, and caress me as fondly when I return."

"I did not mean that I was not glad to see you," protested the maiden; "but — I thought — I thought you could not leave the army."

"Know then, madam," banteringly explained the lover, "that the court-martial which has been trying Lee for his conduct at Monmouth has come to a verdict, which required transmission to Congress, for confirmation, and as I enjoy nothing better than two hundred and forty miles of riding in September heats and dust, I fairly went on my knees to his Excellency for permission to bear it. And now do you ask why I wished it? Do I not deserve something to lighten the journey? Ah, my sweet, if you care for me a little, prove it by once returning me one of my kisses!"

"With whom art thou speaking, daughter?" demanded Mrs. Meredith, losing patience at the continuance of the dialogue she could just realise.

"'Tis I, John Brereton, Mrs. Meredith," spoke up the intruder, "come in search of a night's lodgings."

The information was enough to make the squire forget prudence, in the spleen it aroused. "Have done with your

whispered prittle-prattle, Jan, and let me have sight of this fellow," he called angrily.

"Mr. Meredith! you here?" cried the officer, springing to the doorway, to make sure that his ears did not deceive him.

"Ay, and no wonder 't is a sad surprise to ye," went on Mr. Meredith, irascibly. "There shall be no more stolen interviews — ay, or kisses — from henceforth, ye Jerry Sneak! Come out of the hall, Janice, and have done with this courting by stealth."

"I call Heaven to witness," retorted Jack, hotly, "if once I have acted underhand; and you have no right —"

"Pooh! 't is not for a jail-bird and bond-servant and rebel to lay down the right and wrong to Lambert Meredith."

"Oh, dad-da —" expostulatingly began Janice.

"What is more," continued the father, regardless of her protest, "I'll have ye know that I take your behind-back wooing of my daughter as an insult, and will none of it."

"Is it prudent, Lambert, needlessly to offend Colonel Brereton?" deprecated Mrs. Meredith.

"Ay. Let him give me up to the authorities," sneered the husband. "'T will be all of a piece with his other doings."

"To such an imputation I refuse to make denial," said Brereton, proudly; "but be warned, sir, by the trials for treason now going on in Jersey and Pennsylvania, what fate awaits you if you are captured. Even I could not save you, I fear, after your taking office from the king, if you were caught thus."

"Wait till ye're asked, and we'll see who first needs help, ye or I," retorted the squire. "Meantime understand that I'll not have ye at Greenwood, save as a bond-servant. My girl is promised to a man of property and respectability, and is to be had by no servant who dare not so much as let the world know who were his father and mother!"

It was now too dark to distinguish anything, so the others did not see how Brereton's face whitened. For a moment he was silent, then in a voice hoarsely strident he said: "No man but you could speak thus and not pay the full penalty of his words; and since you take so low an advantage of my position,

further relations with you are impossible. Janice, choose between me and your father, for there can be but the one of us in your future life."

"Oh, Jack," cried the girl, imploringly, "you cannot — if you love me, you cannot ask such a thing of me."

"He puts it well," asserted Mr. Meredith. "Dost intend to obey me, child, or —"

"Oh, dad-da," chokingly moaned Janice, "you know I have promised obedience, and never will I be undutiful, but —"

The aide, not giving her time to complete the sentence, vehemently exclaimed, "'Tis as I might have expected! Lover good enough I am when you are in peril or want, but once saved, I am quickly taught that your favours are granted from policy and not from love."

"'Tis not so," denied the girl, indignantly yet miserably; "I —"

"Be still, Jan," ordered the father. "Think ye, sir, Lambert Meredith's daughter would ever bring herself to wed a no-name and double-name fellow such as ye? Here is a letter I fetched to ye from that — Mrs. Loring: take it and go to her. She's the fit company for gentry of your breed, and not my girl."

"Beg of me forgiveness on your deathbed, or on mine, and I'll not pardon you the words you have just spoken," thundered the officer; "and though you stand on the gallows itself, I will not stir finger to save you. Once for all, Janice, take choice between us."

"'Tis an option you have no right to force upon me," responded the girl, desperately.

"Ay, pay no heed to what he says, Jan. Hand him this letter and let him go."

"If he wants it, he must take it himself," cried Janice. "I'll not touch *her* letter."

The indignant loathing in the tone of the speaker was too clearly expressed not to be understood, and Brereton replied to it rather than to her words. "I tried to speak to you of her — to tell you the whole wretched story, when last I saw you, but I could not bring myself in such hap — at such an hour — the moment was too untimely — and so I did not.

Little I suspected that you already knew the facts of my connection with her."

"Despite the proof I myself had, I have ever refused to credit when told by others what you have just owned," declared the girl. "Nor will I listen to you. From the first I scorned and hated her, and now wish never to hear of the shameful creature again."

Without a word the officer passed into the hall, and began the descent. Before he had reached the foot of the stairs Janice was at its head.

"You'll not go without a good-by, Jack," she pleaded. "Obey dadda I ought—but — Oh, Jack—I will—if you will but come back — Yes, I will kiss you."

Brereton halted and clutched the banister, as if to prevent either departure or return, and could the girl have seen the look on his face she would have been in his arms before he had time to conquer himself. But in doubt as to what the pause indicated, she stood waiting, and after a moment's struggle Jack strode through the hallway and was gone. So long as his footsteps could be heard Janice stood listening to them, but when they had died out of hearing she went into her own room, and the parents heard the bolt shot.

There was something in the girl's eyes the next morning which prevented either father or mother from recurring to the scene, and time did not make it easier; for Janice, with a proudly sad face, did her tasks in an almost absolute silence, which told more clearly than words her misery. Probably the matter would have eventually been reopened, but two days brought a new difficulty which gave both Mr. and Mrs. Meredith something else for thought.

Its first warning was from the hound, who roused his master, as he dozed in an easy-chair one sleepy afternoon, by a growl, and the squire's own ears served to tell him that horsemen were entering the gate. The women on the floor below also heard the sounds, and with a call to make sure that the refugee was seeking his hiding-place, the mother and daughter hurried to the front door to learn what the incursion might portend.

From the porch they could see a half-dozen riders in uni-

form, who had drawn rein just inside the gateway, while yet another, accompanied by two dogs, rode up to where they were standing.

"T is General Lee," exclaimed Mrs. Meredith, as he came within recognising distance. "Probably he wishes a night's lodging."

It was far from what the officer wanted, as it proved; for when he had come within good speaking distance he called angrily, "Ho! ye are there, are ye, hussy? Still busily seeking, I suppose, to be a pick-thanks with those in power by casting ridicule on those they are caballing to destroy."

"I know not the cause for thy extraordinary words, General Lee," replied Mrs. Meredith, with much dignity, "and can only conclude that a warm afternoon has tempted thee into a too free use of the bottle."

"Bah!" ejaculated Lee. "My bicker is not with ye, but with your girl, who, it seems, has a liking for mischief and slander."

"I am ignorant to what thee refers, sir, and cannot believe —" began the mother.

"Deny if you can that she limned the caricature of me which was handed about the theatre, and made me and my dogs the laugh of the town for a week?" interrupted Lee. "Only three days since I had a letter from a friend in Philadelphia, telling me a journal of hers had been examined by the council, and that therein she confessed it as her work."

"Indeed, General Lee," said Mrs. Meredith, apologetically, "the child meant no —"

"I tell you I 'm not to be mollified by any woman's brabble," blustered Lee. "I know 't is part and parcel of an attempt to ruin my character. Even to this silly witling, all are endeavouring to break me down by one succession of abominable, damnable lies. The very court that has been trying me would not believe that white was white as regards me, or that black was black as regards this G. Washington, whom the army and the people consider as an infallible divinity, when he is but a bladder of emptiness and pride. I am now on my way to get their verdict against me, and in favour of this Great Gargantua, or Lama Babek — for I know not which to



MARSHALL III. CHARLES LEE.



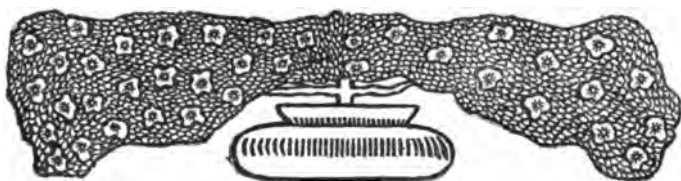
call him — set aside, and I stopped in passing to tell you that I — ”

What the general intended was not to be known, for at this point there came that which turned his thoughts. One of his dogs, an English spaniel, neither interested in Janice's caricature of Lee, nor in Lee's abuse of Washington, took advantage of his master's preoccupation to steal into the house, — a proceeding which Clarion evidently resented, for suddenly from within came loud yaps and growls, which told only too plainly that if there was no protector of the household from the anger of the general, there was one who objected to the intrusion of his dog. Scarcely had the sounds of the fight begun than shrill yelps of pain indicated that one participant was getting very much the worst of it, and which, was quickly shown by the general roaring an oath and a command that they stop the “murder of my Cæsar.” The din was too great within, however, for Clarion to hear the order that both ladies shouted to him, though it is to be questioned if he would have heeded them if he had ; and with another oath Lee was out of his saddle and into the house, his riding-whip raised to take summary vengeance.

Just as the general entered the hallway, the spaniel, wriggling free from the hound's onslaught, fled upstairs, closely pursued by the other dog, and after the two stamped the officer. On the second floor the fugitive faltered, to cast an agonised glance behind him, but sight of Clarion's open mouth was enough, and up the garret stairs he fled. At the top he once more paused, looking in all directions for a haven of refuge ; and seeing a man in the act of retreating behind the loom in the corner, he fled to him for protection. When Lee entered the garret, only Clarion, every bristle on end, was in view, standing guard over a corner of the room ; and striding to him, the general lashed him twice with his riding-whip ere the transgressor, with howls of surprised pain, fled. Then Lee peered behind the loom in search of his favourite.

“Devil seize me !” he exclaimed. “What have we here ? Ho ! a good find,” he jeered, as he made out the squire. He rushed to one of the windows, threw it up, and called a summons to the group of horsemen, then came back as the squire

crawled from his retreat. "Little did I reckon," gloated Lee, "when I read at the tavern this very day the governor's proclamation attainting you, that ye'd come to be my prize. And poetic justice it is that I should have the chance to avenge in you the insult of your daughter."



LIII

UNDER SHADOW OF THE GALLOWS

NO prayer the women could make served to sway Lee from his purpose, and without delay the prisoner was mounted behind one of the escort, taken to Brunswick, and handed over to the authorities. When Mrs. Meredith and Janice, who followed on foot, reached the town, it was to find that the squire was to be carried to Trenton the next morning. A plea was made that they should be permitted to accompany him, but it was refused, and a bargain was finally made with the publican to carry them.

The following evening saw them all in Trenton, Mr. Meredith in jail, and the ladies once more at the Drinkers'. It was too late for anything to be attempted that night; but early the next day Mrs. Meredith, with Mr. Drinker, called on Governor Livingston to plead for mercy.

"Had he come in and delivered himself up, there might have been some excuse for special lenience," the Governor argued; "but captured as he was, there can be none. The people have suffered so horribly in the last two years that they wish a striking example made of some prominent Tory, and will not brook a reasonless pardon. He must stand his trial under the statute and proclamation, and of that there can be but one outcome."

When the supplicants returned with this gloomy prediction, Janice, who held herself accountable for the calamity, primarily by having secured the appointment of her father, and still more by drawing the caricature which had brought such disaster, was so overcome that for a time the mother's anxieties were transferred to her. Realising this, after the first wild outburst of grief and horror were over, Janice struggled desperately to regain self-control; and when the two had gone

to bed, she successfully resisted her longing to give way once more to tears, though no sleep came to her the night through. Yet, if she brought pale cheeks and tired eyes to the breakfast table, there was determination rather than despair in her face and manner, as if in her long vigil she had thought out some deliverance.

In what this consisted was shown by her whispered request to Mr. Drinker, the moment the meal had been despatched, to learn for her if Joe Bagby was in town, and to arrange for an interview. Within the hour her emissary returned with the member of Assembly.

"I suppose you have heard, Mr. Bagby, of my father's capture," she said, without even the preliminary of a greeting.

"Yes, miss," said Bagby, awkwardly and shamefacedly; "'t is news that did n't stop travelling, and 't was all over Trenton before he'd been an hour in town. One way or another, he and I have n't got on well, but I did n't wish him or you any such bad luck, and I'm real sorry it's come about."

"I wished to see you to ask — to beg," went on the girl, "that you would persuade the Governor to set him free."

"But he'd not have the right to do that," replied Joe. "He only can pardon the squire after the trial. And right now I want to say that if you have n't settled on any lawyer, I will take the case and do my best for your dad, and let you take your own time as to paying me."

"Oh, Mr. Bagby," pleaded Janice, "Mr. Drinker is sure that he will be convicted of treason. Can you not do something to stop it?"

"I am afraid he is right, miss. About his only chance will be for the Governor to pardon him."

"But only yesterday he said he should not," wailed Janice. "Can you not persuade him?"

"Guess 't would be only be a waste of my time," answered Joe. "He and I have disagreed over some appointments, and we are n't much of friends in consequence. But aside from that, he's a great trimmer for popularity, and the people just now are desperate set on having the Tories punished."

"Don't say that," besought the girl. "Surely, if — if — if I promise to marry you, cannot you save him?"

"If 't was a bridge to be built, or a contract for uniforms, or something of that sort, I'd have real influence in the Assembly; but I am afraid I can't fix this matter. The Governor's a consarned obstinate man most times, and I don't believe he'll listen to any one in this. What I can do, though, if you'll just do what you offered, miss, will be to save your property from all risk of being taken from you."

"Don't speak of it to me," cried Janice, wildly. "Do you think we could care for such a thing now?"

"Property's property," said Joe, "and 't is n't a good thing to forget, no matter what happens. However, that can wait. Now, about my being your lawyer?"

"I will speak to my mother," replied the girl, sadly, "and let you know her wishes." And the words were so evidently a dismissal that Bagby took his departure.

Without pausing to mourn over the failure, Janice procured paper and pen, and set about a letter; but it was long in the writing, for again and again the pages were torn up. Finally, in desperation, she let her quill run on, regardless of form, grammar, erasures, or the blurs caused by her own tears, until three sheets had been filled with incoherent prayers and promises. "If only you can save him," one read, "nothing you ask of me, even to disobeying him, even to running off with you, will I refuse. I will be your very slave." If ever a proud girl humbled herself, Janice did so in this appeal.

The reading of the missive was begun the next day by an officer seated in the "public" of the City Tavern of Philadelphia, but after a very few lines he rose and carried it to his own room, and there completed it. Then folding it up, he thrust it into his pocket, once more descended the stairs, and inquired of the tavern-keeper: "'T was reported that General Lee came to town yesterday; dost know where he lodges?"

"I hearn he was at the Indian King."

"Thanks," responded the questioner, and then asked: "One thing more. Hast a stout riding-whip you can lend me for a few minutes?"

"Ay, Colonel Brereton. Take any that suits you from the rack."

The implement secured, the officer set out down the street, with a look that boded ill for somebody.

Five minutes later, with one hand held behind his back, he stood in the doorway of the public room of another ordinary, arriving just in time to hear a man proclaim in stentorian tones : —

"I tell ye, any other general in the world than General Howe would have beat General Washington; and any other general in the world than General Washington would have beat General Howe."

"Hush!" said a man. "Here is one of his aides."

"Think ye I care?" roared Lee. "Colonel Brereton and all others of his staff know too well the truth of what I say to dare resent it. The more that hear me, the better."

Brereton strode forward to within three feet of Lee. "You owe your immunity," he said, struggling to speak quietly, "to the very man you are abusing, for not one of his family but would have challenged you after your insulting letters to him, had not General Washington commanded us all to refrain, lest, if any of his staff called you out, it should seem like his personal persecution. Your conduct to him was outrage enough to make me wish to kill you, but now you have given me a stronger reason, and this time there is no high-minded man to save you from my vengeance, you cur!" There was a quick motion of Jack's arm, a swishing sound, and the whip was furiously lashed full across the general's face.

Lee, white with rage, save where a broad red welt stretched from ear to chin, staggered to his feet, pulling at his sword as he rose, but his three companions united to restrain him.

"Take your satisfaction like a gentleman, sir," insisted one, "and not like a tavern broiler."

"I shall see Major Franks within the hour," remarked Brereton, "and have no doubt he will represent me. But if you wish a meeting, you must act promptly, for I shall not remain in the city later than noon to-morrow."

It was just after dawn the next morning that five horsemen turned off from the Frankford road into a meadow, and struck across it to a piece of timber on the other side. One of them was left with the horses, and the remainder took

their way to an open spot, where the trees had been felled. Here the four paired off, and the couples held a brief consultation.

"I care not what the terms be," Brereton ended, "so long as you secure the privilege of advancing, for one of us goes not off the field unhurt."

The seconds held a conference, and then separated. Each gave his principal a pistol, and stationed him so that they stood some twenty paces apart.

"Gentlemen, with your weapons pointed groundward, on the word, you will walk toward each other, and fire when it pleases you," ordered Major Edwards. "Are you ready? Go!"

The duellists, with their pistol hands dropped, walked steadily forward, one, two, three, four, five strides.

"'T is murder, not satisfaction, they seek!" ejaculated Franks, below his breath.

Another and yet another step each took, until there was not twenty feet between the two; then Lee halted and coolly raised his arm; one more step Brereton took as he did so, and not pausing to steady his body, his pistol was swung upward so quickly that it flashed first. Lee's went off a second later, and both men stood facing each other, the smoking barrels dropped, and each striving to see through the smoke of his own discharge. Thus they remained for a moment, then Lee dropped his weapon, staggered, and with the words, "I am hit," went on one knee, and then sank to the ground.

Brereton walked back to his original position, and stood calmly waiting the report of his second, who, with Edwards, rushed to the wounded man's assistance.

"He is struck in the groin," Franks presently informed him; "and while not dangerous, 't will be a month before he's good for anything."

"You mean good for nothing," replied Jack. "I meant to make it worse, but must rest content. As I told you, I ride north without delay, so will not even return to the city. Thank you, David, for helping me, and good-by."

Five hours later, Lee was lying in the Pennsylvania hospital, and Brereton was riding into Trenton. Without the loss of a

moment, the aide sought an interview with the Governor, clearly with unsatisfactory results; for when he left that official his face was anxious, and not even tarrying to give his mare rest, he mounted and spurred northward, spending the whole night in the saddle. Pausing at Newark only to breakfast, he secured a fresh horse, and reached Fredericksburg a little before nightfall. Seeking out the commander-in-chief, he delivered certain papers he carried; but before the general could open them, he said: —

“Your Excellency, I wish speech with you on a matter of life and death. To no other man in the world would I show this letter, but I beg of you to read it, sir, and do what you can for my sake and for theirs.”

Washington took the sheets held out to him and slowly read them from beginning to end. “’T is a sad tale the poor girl tells,” he said when he had finished; “but, my boy, however much I may pity and wish to aid them, my duty to the cause to which I have dedicated my life —”

“Ah, your Excellency,” burst out Jack, “in just this one instance ’twill surely not matter. A word from you to Governor Livingston —”

Washington shook his head. “I have ever refrained from interfering in the civil line,” he said, “and one breaking of the rule would destroy the fabric I have reared with so much pains. If I have gained influence with the people, with the army, and with the State officials, it is because I have ever refused to allow personal considerations to shape my conduct; and that reputation it is my duty to maintain at all hazards, that what I advise and urge shall never be open to the slightest suspicion of any other motive than that of the public good. It is a necessity which has caused me pain in the past, and which grieves me at this moment, but I hold a trust. Do not make its performance harder than it need be.”

“Do I not deserve something at your hands, sir? Faithfully I have served you to my uttermost ability.”

“You ask what cannot be granted, Brereton; and from this refusal I must not recede. Now leave me, my boy, to read the despatches you have brought.”

There was that in the general’s manner which made im-



"Your Excellency, I wish speech with you on a matter of life and death."

possible further entreaty, and the aide obeyed his behest. Yet such was the depth of his concern that he made a second appeal, two days later, when he brought a bunch of circular letters to the State governors, concerning quotas of provisions, which he had written, to his chief for signature.

"Will you not, sir," he implored, "relent and add a postscript to Governor Livingston in favour of mercy for Mr. Meredith?"

"I have given you my reasons, Brereton, why I must not, and all further petitions can but pain us both." Washington signed the series, and taking the sand-box, sprinkled the wet ink on each in turn. "Seal them, and see that they fail not to get into the post," he ordered calmly. Yet as he rose to leave the room, he laid his hand affectionately on Jack's shoulder, and said: "I grieve not to do it, my boy, for your sake and for hers."

The aide took the chair the general had vacated, and began mechanically the closing of the letters; but when that to the Governor of New Jersey was reached, he paused in the process. After a little, he took from his pocket Janice's frantic supplication, and reread it, his face displaying his response to her suffering. "And ten words would save him," he groaned. His eye sought once more the unsealed letter, and stared at it fixedly. "At worst it will be my life, and that is worth little to me and nothing to any one else!" He snatched a pen hastily, dipped it in the ink, but as he set the tip to the paper, paused, his brow clouded. "To trick him after all his generosity!" For a trice Jack hesitated. "He stands too high to be injured by it," he exclaimed. "It hurts not the cause, while 't will kill her if they hang him." Again he set pen to the paper, and wrote a postscript of four lines below Washington's name. "'T is the devil's work, or her good angel's, that I had the writing of the letters, so the penmanship agrees," he muttered, as he folded and sealed it. Gathering up the batch, he gave a reckless laugh. "I said I'd not lift finger to save him from the rope, and here I am taking his place on the gallows. Well, 't is everything to do it for her, scorn and insult me as they may, and to die with the memory that my arms have held and my lips caressed her."



LIV

A GAIN AND A LOSS

IT was two days of miserable doubt which Janice spent after despatching her letter to Brereton. Then something Mr. Drinker told his daughter brought some cheer to the girl.

"Friend Penrhyn informed me that Colonel Brereton rode into town this afternoon, Tabitha," he said, at the supper table; "yet, though I went to the tavern to bespeak his company here this evening, I could not get word of him. 'Tis neglectful treatment, indeed, of his old friends, that three times in succession he should pass through without dropping in upon us."

"He may still come, father," suggested Tabitha; and more than she spent the evening in a state of expectancy. But bedtime arrived; and the morrow came and went without further news of him who had now become Janice's sole hope, and then she learned that he had ridden northward.

"I knew his temper was hot," she sobbed in her own room, "but never did I believe he could be so cruel as to come and go without word or sign."

From the trial, which occurred but three days after this crushing disappointment, the public were excluded, not even Mrs. Meredith and Janice being permitted to attend. The result, therefore, was first brought them by Bagby, who, though his services had been refused by Mr. Meredith, had succeeded in being present.

"The squire's lawyer," he told them, "was n't up to a trick or two that I had thought out, and which might have done something; but he made a pretty good case, if he could n't save him. Morris's charge was enough to convict, but every juryman was ready to vote 'Guilty' before the Chief Justice had so much as opened his mouth."

"Is there nothing to do?" cried Mrs. Meredith.

"I'll see the Governor, and I'll get my friends to see him," promised Bagby; "but don't you go to raising your hopes, for there is n't one chance in a hundred now."

Once again Mrs. Meredith sought interview with Livingston, but the Governor refused to even see her; and both Mr. Drinker's and Bagby's attempts succeeded little better, for they could only report that he declined to further discuss the matter, and that the execution was set for the following Friday.

Abandoning all hope, therefore, Mrs. Meredith wrote a letter, merely begging that they might spend the last night with Mr. Meredith in the jail; and when the next morning she received a call from the Governor, she only inferred that it was in relation to her plea.

"It has been far from my wish, Mrs. Meredith," Livingston said, "to bring suffering to you more than to any one else, and the position I have taken as regards your husband was only that which I deemed most for the good of the State, and most in accord with public opinion. The vipers of our own fireside require punishment; your husband had made himself one of the most conspicuous and unpopular of these by the office he held under the king, and no reason could I discover why he should not reap the punishment he fitly deserved. But this morning a potent one was furnished me, for I received a letter from General Washington, speaking in high terms of Mr. Meredith, and expressing a hope that we will not push his punishment to the extreme of the law. It is the first time his Excellency has ever ventured an opinion in a matter outside of his own concern, and I conclude that he believes stringent justice in this case will injure more than aid our cause; and as the use of his name furnishes me with an explanation that will satisfy the Assembly and people of this State, I can be less rigorous. That you should not endure one hour more of anxiety than need be, I have hurried to you, to tell you that I shall commute his sentence to imprisonment with the other political prisoners in Virginia."

The scene of gratitude and joy that ensued was not describable, and some hours passed before either mother or daughter

became sufficiently composed to take thought of the future. Then, by permission of the jailer, they saw Mr. Meredith and discussed the problem before them. Neither wife nor daughter could bear the thought of again being separated from the squire, and begged so earnestly to be allowed to share the half-captivity, half-exile, that had been decreed him, that he could not deny them, the more that his own heart-strings in reality drew the same way, and only his better judgment was opposed to it.

"I will be a hard journey, wife," he urged, "and little comfort we 're like to find at the end of it. For me there can be no escape, but 't is not necessary that ye should bear it, for 't is to be hoped ye can live on at Greenwood, as ye have already."

"We should suffer more, Lambert, in being separated from thee."

"Oh, dad, nothing could be worse than that," cried Janice, her arms about his neck.

"Have your way, then," finally acceded their lord and master.

This settled, they set about such preparations as were possible. From Mr. Drinker a loan of five thousand dollars — equal to a hundred pounds, gold — was secured, and a bargain struck with a farmer to bring from Greenwood such supplies of clothes as Mrs. Meredith wrote to Sukey to pack and send. To most the prospect would not have been a cheering one, but after the last few days it seemed truly halcyon, and Janice was scarcely able to contain her happiness. She poured her warmest gratitude and thanks out in a letter to Washington, which would have surprised him not a little had he ever received it, but the mail in which it went was captured, and it was a British officer in New York who ultimately read it. Nor did this effusion satisfy her.

"Oh, mommy," she joyfully bubbled, as they were preparing for bed, "was there ever a greater or nobler or kinder man than General Washington?"

And though the first frost of the season was forming crystals on the panes, she knelt down in her short night-rail on a lamb's wool rug, so small that her little feet rested on the cold

boards, and prayed for the general as he had probably never been prayed for, — prayed until she was shivering so that her mother interfered and ordered her to come to bed.

Her prayers were far more needed by some one else. From the commission of his wrong, Brereton made it a point to meet the post-rider as he trotted up to headquarters each afternoon, and on the third day after the action of the Governor, he found in the mail a letter which told him of the success of his trick. While he was still reading, Colonel Hamilton came to him with a message that Washington desired his presence and, squaring his shoulders and setting his mouth as if in preparation for an ordeal, Jack hastened to obey, though, as he came to the closed doorway he hesitated for a moment before he knocked, much as if his courage failed him.

Upon entrance, he found his superior striding up and down the room, a newspaper in his hand, and without preliminary word the general gave expression to his obvious anger.

"I would have you know, Colonel Brereton," sternly he began, "that I am not the man to overlook disobedience of my orders, nor pass over, without a rebuke, such disrespect as you have shown me."

"I do not deny that your Excellency has cause for complaint," replied Jack, steadily; "and in acting as I did I was fully prepared for whatever results might flow from it, even the penalty of life itself; but, believe me, sir, my chief grief will ever be the having deceived you, and my real punishment can be inflicted by no court-martial you may order, but will be in the loss of your trust and esteem."

"You speak in riddles, sir," responded Washington, halting in his walk. "Cause for anger I have richly, for, as I told my whole family, any challenge they might send General Lee would, by the public, be ascribed to persecution. But you know as well as I that your duel with him is no offence to submit to a court-martial, and that you should pretend that I have any such recourse is adding insincerity to the original fault. You have —"

"That, sir, is a charge I indignantly deny," interrupted Jack, warmly, "and I was referring —"

"No denial can justify your conduct, sir," broke in Wash-

ington, wrathfully. "You have exposed me to the criticism and misapprehension of the public. By your disregard of my orders and my wishes, you have deservedly forfeited all right to my favour or my affection."

"Your Excellency forgets —"

"I forget nothing," thundered the general. "'Tis you have forgotten the respect and obedience due me from all my family and —"

"Think you an aide is but a slave," retorted Brereton, hotly, "and that he possesses no right of independent action? Nor did I conceive that your Excellency would ever judge me unheard. I did —"

"The case is too palpable for —"

"Yet misjudge me you have, for I did not challenge Lee because he had insulted you, but because he was shamefully persecuting the woman I love."

Washington, who had resumed his angry pacing of the room, once again halted. "Explain your meaning, sir."

"In your heat, your Excellency has clearly forgot the tale Miss Meredith's letter told of General Lee's conduct as regards herself and her father. With the feeling I bear for her, human nature could not brook such behaviour, and it was that for which I challenged him."

The general stood silent for a moment, then said, "I have been too hasty in my action, Brereton, and have drawn a conclusion that was not justified. I owe you an apology for my words, and trust that this acknowledgment will end the misunderstanding." He offered his hand, as he ended, to the aide.

"I thank your Excellency," answered Jack, "for your prompt reparation, but before accepting it and taking your hand, sir, it is my painful necessity to tell you that I have fully merited all the anger you have expressed. Guiltless as I am of fault as regards General Lee, I have committed a far greater offence against you,—a wrong, sir, which, done with however much deliberation, has caused me unending pain and remorse."

"Explain yourself, my boy," said Washington, kindly.

"Despite your decision, sir, I added a postscript in your letter to Governor Livingston touching upon the case of Mr. Meredith, and made you express a good opinion of him and a

recommendation that he be dealt with leniently. I now hold in my hand a letter from a Trenton friend informing me that this recommendation induced the Governor to commute the death sentence into imprisonment. It is but the news I awaited before informing your Excellency of my breach of trust, and I should have made full confession to you within the hour, had you not sent for me, as I supposed, to charge me with this very treachery. And 't was this of which I was thinking when I spoke expectingly of a court-martial."

During the whole explanation, Washington had stood fixedly, his brows knit, and when the aide paused, he said nothing for a minute ; then he asked : —

"Has there been aught in the past, sir, to have made me merit from you such a stab?"

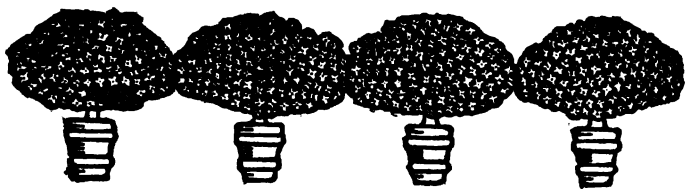
"None, sir," answered Jack, gravely. "And whatever reason I can find for the action in my own heart, there is nothing I can offer in its defence to you."

Washington sat down at his desk and leaned his head on his hand. "Is it not enough," he said, "that Congress is filled with my enemies, that the generals on whom I must depend are scheming my ruin and their own advancement, but that even within my own family I cannot find those who will be faithful to me? My God ! is there no one I can trust?"

"Your Excellency's every word," said Jack, with tears in his eyes, "cuts me to the heart, the more that nothing you can say can increase the blame I put upon myself. I beg of you, sir, to believe me when I say that, be your grief what it may, it can never equal mine. And I beg that if my past relations to you plead ever so little for a merciful judgment of my conduct, you will remember that my betrayal was committed from no want of affection for you, but because one there was, and but one alone, whom I loved better."

Washington rose and faced Brereton, his self-control regained. "Your lapse of duty to the cause we are engaged in, sir, and my sense of it, make it out of the question that I should ever again trust you ; it is therefore impossible for me longer to retain you upon my staff. But your loyalty and past service speak loudly in your favour, and I shall not, therefore, push your public punishment further than to demand your

resignation from my family, and so soon as there is a vacancy among the officers of the line you will take your place according to the date of your commission. The wrong you have done me personally is of a different nature, and ends from this moment the affection I have borne you and such friendship as has existed between us."



LV

PRISONERS OF WAR

THE Governor had warned the Merediths that the removal to Charlottesville must await the chance of an empty army transport, or other means of conveyance, and for more than a month they waited, not knowing at what hour the order would come.

Finally they were told to be ready the following morning; and at daybreak the three, with a guard, were packed into a hay cart, the larger part of the townsfolk collecting to view their departure. Nor did Mr. Bagby, who had made a number of calls upon them in the interval, fail to appear for a good-by.

"Just you remember, miss," he urged, "that my arguments and General Washington's was what saved your dad, and that I can still do a lot to save your property. Don't forget either that I'm going to go on rising. Only think it over well, and you'll see which side your bread is buttered on, for, if you are mighty good-looking, you're no fool."

"Thank you, Mr. Bagby, for everything you have done or tried to do," replied the girl; and the squire, who had heard the whole speech, said nothing, though the effort to remain silent was clearly a severe one.

"Whither do we go first?" asked Mrs. Meredith of the driver, after the ferry-boat had left the Jersey shore and the spectators both behind.

"Our orders is to take you to Reading, an' hand you over to the officer in charge of the Convention snogers, pervided the last detachment hev n't left theer; if they hev, we are to lick up till we overtake them."

"What regiment is that?" questioned Janice.

"Guess ye're a bit green on what's goin' on," chuckled one of the guard. "Them's poppy-cock, hifalutin, by-the-grace-of-God an' King Georgie, come-in-an'-surrender-afore-we-extirpate-ye, Johnny Burgoyne's army, as did a little capitulatin' themselves. We've kep' 'em about Boston till we've got tired of teamin' pork an' wheat to 'em, an' now we're takin' 'em to where the pigs an' wheat grows, to save us money, an' to show 'em the size of the country they calkerlated to overrun. I guess they'll write hum that that job's a good one to sub-let, after they've hoofed it from Cambridge to Charlottesville."

The departure had been well timed, for when they drove into Reading, about five, long lines of men, garbed in green or red uniforms, were answering the roll-call as a preliminary to having quarters for the night assigned to them in the court-house, churches, and school. After much search, the officer in command was found, and the prisoner turned over to him, to his evident displeasure.

"Heavens!" he complained, "is it not bad enough to move two thousand troops, a third of whom no man can understand the gibberish of, to say nothing of General de Riedesel's wife and children, but I must have other women to look out for? I wish that Governor Livingston would pardon less and hang more!"

Unpromising as this beginning was, it proved a case of growl and not of bite, for the colonel speedily secured a night's lodging for them in a private house, and the next morning made a place for the two women beside the driver of one of the carts of the baggage train, the squire being ordered to march on foot with the column.

The journey proved a most trying one. The November rains, which wellnigh turned the roads from aids into obstacles, so impeded them that frequently they were not able to compass more than six or seven miles in a day, and it sometimes happened, therefore, that they were not able to reach the village or town on which they had been billeted, and were compelled to spend the night in the open fields, often with scanty supplies of provisions as an additional discomfort. From the inhabitants of the villages and farms, too, they met with more kicks than ha'pence. Again and again the people refused to



"The roads were so heavy that sometimes they only made six or seven miles in a day."

sell anything to those whom they considered their enemies, and some even denied them the common courtesy of a drink of water. The chief amusement of the children along the route was to shout opprobrious or derisive epithets as they passed, not infrequently accompanied with stones, rotten apples, and now and then the still more objectionable egg. The squire's opinion of Whiggism went to an even lower pitch, but his womenkind bore it unflinchingly and uncomplainingly, happy merely in the escape from greater suffering.

As for Janice, she took what came with such merriness and good cheer that she was soon friends not merely with a number of their fellow-companions in misery, the British and Brunswick officers, but with the officers of their escort of Continental troops, and they were all quickly vying to do the little they could to add to the Merediths' comfort and ease. Of the miserable lodgings, whether in town or field, they were sure to be given the least poor; no matter how short were the commons, their needs were supplied; at every halting-place they received the first firewood cut; and time and again some one of the officers dismounted that Mr. Meredith might take his place in the saddle for an hour.

The girl made a yet more fortunate acquaintance on a night of especial discomfort and privation, after they had crossed the Pennsylvania boundary and were well into the semi-wilderness of the Blue Ridge Mountains. A washed away bridge so delayed their morning progress that they had advanced only a little over five miles, and were still four miles from their appointed camping ground, when the first snowstorm of the season set in, and compelled them to bivouac along the roadside. The ration issued to each prisoner on that particular afternoon consisted of only a half-pound of salt pork and a handful of beans; and as she had frequently done before, Janice set out to make a tour of the straggling farms of the neighbourhood, in the hope of purchasing milk, eggs, or other supplies to eke the scanty fare. At the first log cabin she came to she made her request, and for a moment was hopeful, for the woman replied: —

“Yes. I have eggs and milk and chickens, and vegetables in a great plenty, but — ”

"And what are your prices?"

"— But not a morsel of anything do you get. You come to our land to kill us and to waste our homes. Now it is our turn to torment you. I feed no royalists."

Her second application drew forth an even sterner rebuff, for the housewife, before Janice had said half of her speech, cried, "Be off with you, you Tory! think you I would give help to such nasty dogs?"

The third attempt was equally futile, for she was told: "Not for a thousand dollars would I give you anything, and if you would all die of hunger, 't would be so much the better."

The maiden was long since too accustomed to this treatment to let it discourage her, and in her fourth essay she was more fortunate. While the woman was refusing, the farmer himself appeared upon the scene, and moved by pity, or perhaps by the youth and beauty of the petitioner, vetoed his wife's decision, and not merely filled her pail with milk, but added a small basket of eggs and apples, declining to accept the one hundred dollars in Continental bills she tendered.

Her quest had taken Janice nearly two miles away from her quarters, and in returning with this wealth she was compelled to pass the length of the encampment. This brought her presently to a large tent, from which issued the sobs of a child, intermixed with complaints in French of cold and hunger, with all of which a woman's voice was blended, seeking to comfort the weeper.

On impulse, the girl turned aside and looked through the half-closed flap. Within she saw a woman of something over thirty years of age, with a decidedly charming face, sitting on a camp-stool with a child of about three years old in her arms and two slightly older children at her feet, from one of whom came the wails.

"We do not know each other, Madame de Riedesel," Janice apologised in the best French she could frame, "but Captain Geismar and others have told me so much about you that I — I —" There Janice came to a halt, and then in English, colouring as she spoke, she went on, "'T is mortifying, but though I thought I had become quite a rattler in French, the moment I need it, I lose courage."

"Ach!" cried Madame de Riedesel. "Nevair think. I speak ze Anglais parfaitement. Continuez."

"I was passing," explained Janice, mightily relieved, "and hearing what your little girl was saying, I made bold to intrude, in the hope that you will let me share my milk and eggs with the children." As she spoke, Janice held out to each of the three a rosy-cheeked apple, and the sobs had ended ere her explanation had.

"Ah!" cried the woman, "zees must be ze Mees Meredeez whom zay told me was weez ze waggon in ze rear, and who, zay assure me, was a saint. Zat must you be, to offer your leettle store to divide with me. Too well haf I learned how difficile it ees to get anyzing from zeese barbarians."

"They are hard, madame," explained Janice, "because they deem us foes."

"But women cannot be zare enemies, and yet ze women ze worst are. Ma foi! Weez ze army I kept through ze wilderness, ze bois, from Canada, and not one unkind or insult did I receef, till I came to where zere were zose of my own sex. Would you beleef it, in Boston ze femme zay even spat at me when I passed zem on ze street. And since from Cambridge we started, when I haf wished for anyzing, my one prayer zat it shall be a man and not a woman I must ask it has been. Ze women, I say it weez shame, are ze brutes, and ze men, zay seek to be gentle, mais, hélas! zay are born of ze women!"

Janice, pouring half her milk into an empty bowl that was on the table, and dividing her eggs, smiled archly as she said, "I fear, then, that my call is not a welcome one, since, hélas! I am a woman."

The baroness spilled the little girl from lap to floor as she sprang to her feet and clasped the caller in her arms. "You are une ange," she cried, "and I geef you my lofe, not for now, but for ze all time for efer."

The acquaintance thus begun ripened rapidly. In her gratitude for the kindness, Madame de Riedesel, who had a roomy calash and a light baggage waggon, insisted that Janice and Mrs. Meredith should quit the springless army van in the rear and travel henceforth with the advance in one or the other of her vehicles, giving them far greater ease and comfort.

Sometimes the children were sent with the baggage, and the three ladies used the calash, but more often Janice and Madame de Riedesel rode in it, with a child on each lap, and one sandwiched in between them, and the squire took the empty seat beside Mrs. Meredith in the waggon.

A second generosity of the new friend was her quickly offering to share with them the large officer's marquee that her husband's rank had secured for her, with the comfortable beds that formed a part of her camp equipment; and as they had hitherto been cramped into a small field tent, with only blankets and dead leaves laid on the frozen ground to sleep upon, the invitation was a still greater boon. Close packing it was, but the weather was now so cold that what was lost in space was made up for in warmth.

It was early in January that they finally reached their destination, — an improvised village of log huts, some two miles from Charlottesville, named Saratoga, from the capitulation that had served to bring it into being; but so far as the Merediths were concerned, it meant a change rather than a lessening of the privation. The cabin to which they were assigned consisted of one windowless room, and was without a chimney. They were necessarily without furniture, their sole stock beyond their own clothing being a few blankets and cooking utensils, which they had brought with them. Nor were they able to purchase much that they needed at the neighbouring town, for their cash had been seriously depleted by what they had bought in Trenton, and by the expenses of the march, while what was left had shrunk in value in the two months' march from fifty dollars to seventy-five dollars, paper, for one in gold.

Seeking to make the best of it, the three set to work diligently. From a neighbouring mill slabs were procured, which, being cut the right length and laid on logs, were made to do for beds, and others served to make an equally rough table. Sections of logs were utilised for chairs, and the squire built a crude fireplace a few feet from the doorway. At best, however, the discomfort was really very great. Even with the door closed, the cabin was cold almost beyond the point of endurance, and if it was not left open, the only light that came

and in
vice m
ach in
ure too
L
ly offer
nat he
e beh
ry had
onir
sleep
king
st in

les-
iles
ion
he
a
e
t
r



Madame de Riedesel.

to them was through the chinks of the logs. Yet their suffering was far less than that of the troops, for many of the huts were unfinished when they arrived, and with three feet of snow on the ground, most of them were compelled to roof their own quarters and even in some cases entirely build them, as a first step to protection.

General de Riedesel, who had gone before his wife with the first detachment, that he might arrange a home in advance, had rented "Colle," the large house of Philip Mazzei, close to the log barracks. Madame de Riedesel was therefore at once in possession of comfortable quarters, and upon hearing from Janice how they were living, she offered her a home with them.

"Come to us, liebbling," she begged. "Ze children zay lofe you so zat almost jealous I am; already my goot husband he says ze Mees Meredeez ees charmant, and I — ah, I neet not tell it, for it tells itself."

"If it were right I would, Frederica, and I cannot thank you enough for wanting me; but ever since mommy had the fever she has not been really strong, and both she and dadda need me. Perhaps though, if you and the children — whom I dearly love — truly like me, you will help me in another way?"

"And how?"

"I heard you complaining to Baron de Riedesel yesterday of not being able to get a nurse. Will you not give me the place, and let my pay be for us all to live in your garret? We will make as little trouble —"

"Ach! Why deet I not it think before?" cried the baroness, boxing her own ear. "Cochon! Brute! You come, ma pauvre! Mais not as bonne, non, non."

"Indeed, Frederica, 't is the only way that we can. We could not live upon you without in some way making a return, and the paper money with which we furnished ourselves has gone on falling till now 't is worth but a threepence in the pound, so that we could not hope to pay for —"

"Bah! Who asks? You come as our guests; when you had ze plenty of milk and eggs you shared it weez us, and so now we share our plenty weez you. You, a proud girl, to be a nurse, indeet!"

"'T is that pride which asks it, my dear. Ah, if you only would let me! Mommy suffers so with the cold, and has such a frightful cough, that every day I fear to see it become a pneumonia, and —"

"Stop! I was ze wrong. Come as you please, à l'instant. Ah, ze leettle ones, zay will go craze for joy; ze baron he will geef no more eyes to ze wife who is losing her shape, and all ze officairs, zay will say, 'Gott! How I lofe children!' Mais, I will not angree be, but kiss you so, and so, and so. And to all will I say, 'Voilà, deet efer woman haf such a frent for herself and such a second mütter for her children?'"



LVI

A LIFE OF CAPTIVITY

THE removal to Colle was made the same day, and Janice assumed her new charge. It was, as it proved, not a very onerous one, for the children were well mannered for their years, and, young as they were, in the German method they were kept pretty steadily at tasks, while an old servant of the general, a German Yager, was only too delighted at any time to assume care of them. Janice herself slept in the nursery, and at first Mr. and Mrs. Meredith were given, as suggested, accommodation in the garret. But the baron, not content with the space at his command, as soon as the weather permitted, had built a large dining-room and salon, separate from the house, and this supplied so much more space that the parents were given a good room on a lower floor.

The new arrangement not merely brought them comfort, but also pleasure. Mr. and Mrs. Meredith were treated as guests; and Madame de Riedesel made Janice quite as much her own companion as an attendant on the children. With her, once her nervousness was conquered, Janice talked French entirely; and more for amusement than for improvement, she began the study of German, with her friend as instructor; and, having as well the aid of every Brunswick officer, who only too gladly frequented the house, she was soon able to both read and speak it, to the delight of the baron, who preferred his native tongue; though his wife, German-born as she was, could not understand how any one who could talk French would for a moment willingly use any other tongue. Furthermore, they taught each other the various stitches in embroidery and crocheting each knew; and the German, who was an excellent housewife, not merely made

Janice her assistant in the household cares, but, after expressing horror that the girl knew nothing of accounts, spent many hours inducting her into the mysteries by which she knew to a farthing how her money was expended.

Although these were all pastimes rather than labours to Janice, there were lighter hours in which she made a fourth at whist, learned chess from the general, and played on the harpsichord or sang to him. Once a week there was a musicale, at which all who could play on any instrument contributed a share, and dances and dinners were frequently given by the Riedesels and by General Phillips, the major-general in command of the British part of the Convention prisoners. Horses in plenty were in the stable, and the two ladies, well escorted by officers, took almost daily rides, the baroness making herself a figure of remark to the natives by riding astride her horse in a short skirt and long boots.

With the advent of summer, their pleasures became more pastoral. So soon as the weather permitted, the gentry of the neighbourhood came to call upon their foes, and this led to much dining about. Then, too, there were out-of-door *fêtes* and picnics, oftentimes at long distances from the cantonment; so that ere many weeks the Riedesels and the Merediths had come to know both the people and the region intimately.

A sudden end came to these amusements by an untoward event. Janice and General de Riedesel had made the flower-garden at Colle their particular charge, working there, despite the heat, for hours each day, till early in August, when one day the baron was found lying in a pathway unconscious, his face blue, his hands white, and his eyes staring. He was hurriedly carried into the house, and when the army surgeon arrived, it was found to be a case of sunstroke. Though he was bled copiously, the sufferer improved but slowly, and before he was convalescent developed the "river" or "breakbone fever." Finally he was ordered over the mountains to the Warm Springs, to see whether their waters might not benefit him; and, leaving Mr. and Mrs. Meredith in charge, the baroness and Janice went with him, half as companions and half as nurses.

Upon their arrival there, they found the Springs so crowded that all the log cabins, which, by custom, fell to the first comers, were already occupied. Declining an offer from one of these to share lodgings, they set to work in a proper spot to make themselves comfortable; for, having foreseen this very possibility, they had come amply supplied with tents. Before they had well begun on their encampment, two negroes in white and red livery appeared, and the spokesman, executing a bow that would have done honour to a lord chamberlain, handed Madame de Riedesel a letter which read as follows:—

"Mrs. Washington preasents her most respectful complements to the Barones de Reedaysell, and her sattisfacshon at being informed of her arival at the Springs. She begs that if the barers of this can be of aney a sistance to the Barones in settling, that she will yuse them as long as they may be of sarvis to her.

"Mrs. Washington likewise bespeeks the honer of the Baronesses party to dinner today and begs that if it will be aney convenience to her, that she will sup as well."

Both offers Madame de Riedesel was only too glad to accept; and at the dinner hour, guided by the darkies, they made their way to Lady Washington's lodgings, to find a plump, smiling, little lady, who received them with much dignity, properly qualified with affability. The meal was spread underneath the trees, and they were quickly seated about the table and chatting genially over it.

Once the newness was taken off the acquaintance, the baroness made an appeal to the hostess for a favour. "Ah, Laty Washington," she begged, "ze surgeons, zay declare my goot husband he cannot recovair ze fevair in ze so hot climate, and zat ze one goot for him will be zat he to New York restores himself. I haf written ze prediction to Sir Henry Clinton, applicating zat he secure ze exchange of ze baron immediate-ment, mais, will you not also write to ze General Washington and ask him, also, zees zing to accomplish?"

"I would in a moment, gladly, baroness," replied Mrs. Washington, "but I assure you that the general would highly disapprove of my interfering in a public matter. Do not

hesitate, however, to write yourself, for I can assure you he will do everything in his power to spare you anxiety or discomfort."

"Zen you zink he will my prayer grant?"

"I am sure he will, if it is possible, for, aside from his generous treatment of every one, let me whisper to you that 't is not a quality in his composition to say 'No' to a pretty woman."

"Oh, no, Frederika," broke in Janice; "you need not have the slightest fear of his Excellency. He is everything that is kind and great and generous!"

"What!" exclaimed Mrs. Washington. "You know the general, then?"

"Oh, yes," cried Janice, rapturously; "and if you but knew, Lady Washington, how we stand indebted to him at this very moment!"

The hostess smiled in response to the girl's enthusiasm. "'T is certain he refused you nothing, Miss Meredith," she said.

"Indeed, but he did," answered Janice, merrily. "Wouldst believe it, Lady Washington, though perhaps 't is monstrous bold of me to tell it, 't is he that has had to keep me at a distance, for I have courted him most outrageously!"

"'T is fortunate," replied the matron, "that he is a loyal husband, and that I am not a jealous wife, for 't is a way all women have with him. What think you a Virginian female, who happened to be passing through camp, had the forwardness to say to me but t' other day? 'When General Washington,' she writ, 'throws off the hero and takes up the chatty, agreeable companion, he can be downright impudent sometimes, Martha, — such impudence as you and I, and every woman, always like.'"

"Ah," asserted Madame de Riedesel, "ze goot men, zay all lofe us dearly. Eh, Janice?"

"What!" demanded the hostess. "Is your name Janice? Surely this is not my nice boy Jack's Miss Meredith?"

The girl reddened and then paled. "I beg, Lady Washington —" she began; but the baroness, who had noted her change of colour, cut her off.

"You haf a lofer," she cried, "and nevair one word to me told? Ach, ingrate! And your lofe I zought it was mine."

"Miss Meredith is very different, then, from a certain gentleman," remarked Mrs. Washington, laughingly. "I first gained his confidence when he lay wounded at headquarters winter before last; but once his secret was unbosomed, I could not so much as stop to ask how he did but he must begin and talk of nothing but her till he became so excited and feverish that I had to check or leave him for his own good."

"Indeed, Lady Washington," protested the girl, her lip trembling in her endeavour to keep back the tears, "once Colonel Brereton may have thought he cared for me, but, I assure you, 't was but a half-hearted regard, which long since died."

"'T is thy cruelty killed it, then," asserted Mrs. Washington, "for, unless my eyes and ears deceived me, never was there more eager lover than —"

"'T is not so; on the contrary, he won my heart and then broke it with his cruelty," denied the girl, the tears coming in spite of herself. "I pray you forgive my silly tears, and do not speak more of this matter," she ended.

"I cannot believe it of him," responded Lady Washington. "But 't was far from my thought to distress you, and it shall never be spoke of more."

The subject was instantly dropped; and though Janice saw much of Lady Washington during their three weeks' stay at the Springs, and a mutual liking sprang up between the two, never again was it broached save at the moment that they set out on their return to Colle, when her new friend, along with her farewell kiss, said, "I, too, shall soon leave the Springs, my dear, and journey ere long to join the general at headquarters for the winter. Have you any message for him?"

"Indeed, but I have," eagerly cried Janice. "Wilt take him my deepest thanks?"

"And no more?"

"If your ladyship were willing," said Janice, archly, "I would ask you to take him my love and a kiss."

"He shall have them, though I doubt not he would prefer such gifts without a proxy," promised Mrs. Washington, smil-

ing. Then she whispered, "And can I not carry the same to some one else?"

"Never!" replied the girl, grave on the instant. "Once I cared for him, but such feeling as I had has long since died, and nothing can ever restore it."

Keenly desirous as the Merediths were for the well-being of the Riedesels, it was impossible for them not to feel a pang of regret when, one morning, the baroness broke the news to them that Washington had yielded to her prayer, that her husband and General Phillips had at last been exchanged, and that they were to set out within the week for New York. Yet, even in the departure, their benefactors continued their kindness; for, having rented Colle for two years, they placed the house at their disposal for the balance of the lease; and when, after tearful good-byes had been made and they were well started on their northern journey, Janice went to her room, she found a purse containing twenty guineas in gold as a parting gift from the general, a breastpin of price from the baroness, and a ring from Gustava, with a note attached to it in the English print which Janice had taught her, declaring her undying affection and her intention to ask God to change her to a boy that when she grew up she might return and wed her.

The months that drifted by after this departure were lean ones of incident. Succeeding as they did to the ample garden, poultry, pigs, and two cows which the baron had donated to them, they were quite at ease as to food. The junior officers who still remained in charge of the troops saw to it that they did not want for military servants, thus relieving them of all severe labour; and while they deeply felt the loss of the Riedesels, there was no lack of company.

The void the departure of the baroness and children made in Janice's life was partly filled by an acquaintance already made which now grew into a friendship. Soon after their settlement at Colle, Mrs. Jefferson, wife of the Governor, who lived but a few miles away at Monticello, had come to call on them, a visit which she was unable to repeat, owing to her breaking health, but this very invalidism, as it turned, tended to foster the intimacy. Her husband being compelled by public events to be at the capital, she was much alone, and often sent over

an invitation to Janice to come and spend a few days with her. As a liking for the girl ripened, it induced an attempt to serve them.

"I have spoke to Thomas of your hard lot," she told Janice, "and repeated to him enough of the tale you told me to convince him that your father was not the active Tory he is reputed to be, and have at last persuaded him to write to Governor Livingston bespeaking a permission for you to return to your own home, if your father will but give his parole to take no part in public affairs."

"Oh, Mrs. Jefferson, how can we ever thank you?"

"I do not deserve it, believe me, Janice, for I long postponed what I knew I ought to do, through regret at the thought of losing your visits."

"That but deepens our thanks. If you —"

"I'll not listen to them now," replied the friend, "for who can say that they will come to aught? 'T will be time enough when it has really accomplished something."

Distant as they were from the active operations of the war, the inmates of Colle were kept pretty well informed of its progress, for it was a constant theme of conversation, and the movements were closely followed on the military maps of the officers who frequented the house. From them Janice heard how Clinton, despairing of conquering the Northern colonies by force of arms, had resorted to bribery, but only to win the services of an officer he did not wish, and not the desired post of West Point; and with tears in her eyes she listened to the news that André, setting ambition above honour, had paid for the lapse with his life. Then, as the tide of war shifted, it was explained to her why the British general, keeping tight hold on New York as a base for operations, transferred a material part of his forces to the South, where, in succession, he captured Savannah and Charleston, and almost without resistance overran the States of Georgia and the two Carolinas.

"You see, Miss Meredith," she was told, "the yeomanry of the Northern States are so well armed that we have found it impossible to hold the country against their militia; but in the Southern States, aside from the difference between the energetic Northerners and the more indolent Southrons, the

long distances between the plantations, and the fact that the gentry don't dare to trust their slaves with weapons, make them practically defenceless. The plan now seems to be, therefore, to wear the Northern colonies out by our fleet and by occasional descents upon the towns of the coast, while we meantime conquer the Southern States. Had it been adopted from the first, the strength would have been sapped out of the rebellion and it would have been ended two years ago; but the new strategy cannot fail, even at this late date, to bring them to their knees in time."

An evidence of the truth of this surmise, and an abrupt ending to the peaceful life at Saratoga, came to the little settlement in the first week of the year 1781, when a post rider spurred into Charlottesville with a despatch to the County Lieutenant of Albemarle announcing that a British fleet had entered the Capes of the Chesapeake and seized the town of Portsmouth, and summoning the militia to embody, for Virginia was threatened with the fate which had already befallen her sister States to the southward.



LVII

A PAPER MONEY AND MILITIA WAR

THE alarm of the British invasion was sufficient to throw the whole of Virginia into a panic, but especially the neighbourhood about Charlottesville, for it was inferred that one purpose of their coming was to attempt to liberate the Convention prisoners. The cantonment, therefore, was hastily broken up, and all the troops were marched over the mountains to Winchester, or northward into Pennsylvania, scarcely time for them to pack their few possessions being accorded to them. From this deportation the Merediths were excepted, for as political prisoners, no mention of them was made in the orders issued by Washington and the Virginia Council; and so Colonel Bland left them unmolested, the sole residents of the once overcrowded village of huts. The removal of the prisoners proved a needless precaution, for, after remaining but a few days, the British fleet retired, having effected little save to frighten badly the people, but the apprehension subsided as quickly as it had come.

The hope of quiet was a false one, for in a few months a second expedition, under the command of Arnold, sailed up the James River and captured and burned Richmond. To face this new enemy, to which the militia of the State were deemed inadequate, Washington detached a brigade under the command of Lafayette from the Northern army, supposing the movement, like the previous one, a mere predatory expedition, which could be held in check by this number of troops; and upon news that General Phillips, with reinforcements, had joined Arnold, he further despatched a second brigade under Wayne.

Meantime, the force under Cornwallis, after overrunning North Carolina, now suddenly swung northward and effected a

juncture with the British force in Virginia, raising it to such strength that Lafayette dared not risk a battle, and was left no option, as the British advanced inland, but to fall back rapidly toward the mountains.

These latter events succeeded one another with such rapidity that the people of Charlottesville first heard of some of them by the arrival of Governor Jefferson and the members of the Assembly, to which place they had voted an adjournment just previous to their being forced to abandon the capital. Sessions had scarcely been begun, however, when word was brought that the enemy was within a few miles of the town, and once again they took to their heels and fled over the mountains into the Shenandoah valley, escaping none too soon, as it proved, for Tarleton's cavalry rode into the streets of Charlottesville so close upon what was left of the government of Virginia that some of the members were captured.

The Merediths, two miles away at Saratoga, first heard the news of these latter events from a captain of militia, who, accompanied by six sullen-looking companions, rode up early on the morning of the raid and sharply ordered the three to mount the led horses he brought with him.

"I'm ridin'," he explained, "to collect the horses and alarm the hundreds towards Boswell's, and the county lieutenant ordered me to take you away from here. No, I can't wait to have you pack."

"Tis surely not necessary that we should be treated so," pleaded Mr. Meredith. "My wife has not the strength to bear a long —"

"Can't help that. Like as not the British horse ha'n't had word that the Convention troops have been sent away, and will ride this far, and we reckon we can't have you givin' them no information," answered the man. "I don't want no talk. Into the saddle with you."

Protests and prayers were absolutely unavailing, and the whole party hurriedly set off at the best pace the horses were able to go. As they journeyed, a halt was made at each cabin and each plantation, and every white man found was summarily ordered by the captain to get his gun and join the party; while at each place all the horses were impressed, not merely to



Virginia State Money.

carry those unprovided with one, but to prevent their falling into the hands of the foe. Nor did the captain pay more heed to the expostulations and grumbings of the men, at being called away from their crops at the busiest farming season, nor of the women, at being deprived of their protectors in times of such danger, than he had to the weaker ones of the Merediths.

"The invasion law just passed by the 'sembly calls out every man as can fight, and declares every one as won't a traitor, so you can take your choice of shootin' at the British or bein' shot by us," was the captain's unvarying formula, be the complaints what they might.

As if to make the ill feeling the greater, too, he told the whole party at one point of the route, "If you-alls had been patriots and 'listed four weeks ago, you 'd every one of you've got a bounty of five hundred dollars of the money my saddle-bags is filled with; but you had n't spunk, so it serves you-alls good and handsome that now you've got to fight for 'nary a shillin'."

"We would n't have been a tinker's damn the richer if we had," snarled one of the unwilling conscripts. "I'd rather have a pound of hay than the same weight in cursed state money, for you can feed the hay to a hoss, but I'm consarned if t' other's good for anythin'."

"Say, cap," asked a second, "has you ralely got them saddle-bags o' yourn filled with the stuff?"

"Ay. The presses were at Charlottesville busy strikin' it, and I was told to help save what was already printed from capture."

"Lord! the British would n't have seized that, with all the cord wood there is in Charlottesville, to say nothin' of grind-stones and ploughs and chimbleys built of brick and other things of value," asserted the original speaker.

"Might come handy along of all the terbacker they've took down to Petersburg. Do to light a pipe with, I reckon," suggested another.

"Say, cap," again spoke up the second speaker, "the raison as why I asked that there question is that we'll be gettin' to Hunker's ordinary at the four corners right smart off now, and I was calculatin' if you had enough of the rags

with you to set us up a drink all round? 'T won't cost more 'n ten thousand dollars if Hunkers ain't in an avaricious mood."

The officer had been absolutely inattentive to the complaints and growls, but the quizzing made him lose his temper. "You-alls shut your jaws, the lot of you, or when we reach the roundyvous this evenin' I'll report you to the kurnel and you'll get the guard-house or worse," he threatened. "I'm danged if I don't believe every one of you-alls is a Tory at heart."

"A little more o' this'll make me one," muttered a man who hitherto had been silent, but he spoke so low as to be heard by his fellow unfortunates only, and not by the captain.

"Don't talk to me of the tyranny of Britain after this!" responded his immediate neighbour.

The militia officer would have done better to let the dissatisfaction find its vent in jokes; for, deprived of this outlet, the malcontents took to whispering among themselves in a manner that boded ill for something or somebody. But he was too busy securing each new recruit and each horse to give attention to the signs that might have warned him.

A rude awakening came to the captain when the motley cavalcade drew up at the ordinary at the cross-roads, for as he was in the act of dismounting, two of the party, who had been more expeditious in their movements, caught him by the leg as he swung it clear of the saddle, and brought him violently to the ground. He was held in that position while his hands and feet were tied with his own bridle, as many of the men as could get about him assisting in the operation, while the remainder, the Merediths excepted, kept up a chorus of approving remarks, or of gibing and mocking comments on the officer's half-smothered menaces and oaths. Once secured, he was dragged to the guide-post, and with his stirrup straps was fastened to it securely. This done, his saddle-bags were pulled off his horse and the paper money was emptied out and heaped about his feet. Meantime, and as an evidence of how carefully every detail of their revenge had been planned, one of the ring-leaders had disappeared into the tavern, and now returned with a lighted brand.

"You can threat and cuss all you hanker," he chuckled.



"Two of the party caught him by the leg and brought him violently to the ground."



"If we ain't to have no bounty, we'll give you some of ourn," he added malignantly, as he stooped and set fire to the pile of bills.

"Oh, don't!" screamed Janice. "Dadda, stop them!"

"For shame!" echoed Mr. Meredith, swinging out of his saddle, in which hitherto he had remained a passive spectator.

"Hands off," warned the torch-bearer, "if you don't want to be tied alongside of him."

There was nothing to do, and the ladies were only able to turn their backs on the sight; but they could not thus escape the howls of terror and pain that the miserable victim uttered, though the squire sought to save them from this by taking hold of the two bridles and leading their horses away.

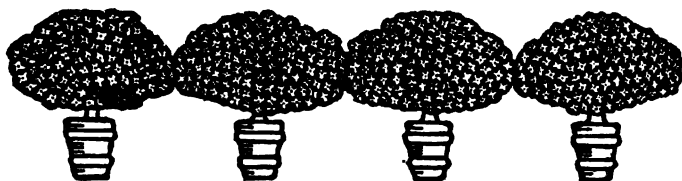
This movement served to attract their attention to something hitherto not observed, and which the absorption of the militia in their revenge still prevented them from noting. On the road by which they had come arose a thick cloud of dust, out of which horsemen seemed to be riding, but, though they came on at a hand gallop, the screen, swept onward by the breeze, kept pace with the riders, and even at times hid now one, now all, from view, causing the squire, who first caught sight of the phenomenon, to rub his eyes, that he might have assurance that it was not a phantasm of his brain. Of this another sense furnished quick evidence, for even above the jeers of the torturers and the shrieks of the tortured sounded the clatter of hoofs. At the first warning, cries of alarm escaped from many mouths, and with the fright of guilt, there was a wild stampede for the horses; before the half of them were in the saddle, the thunder of a column of horse was close upon them, and as, mounted and unmounted, they scattered, there came a rush of red-coated troopers in amongst them. Loud above the tumult and uproar came the sharp order,—

"Capture what men you can, but don't let a horse escape!"

Mr. Meredith, the moment the militia had deserted the fire, rushed forward, and with three kicks scattered the flaming currency from about the man's legs,—a proceeding which attracted the attention of the officer who gave the order.

“What is the meaning of this?” he demanded, but all the reply he received was a startled exclamation which burst from the squire.

“What!” he ejaculated. “Why, this passes very belief! Pox me, if ’t is not Phil Hennion.”



LVIII

FROM BLUE RIDGE TO TIDE WATER

FOR a few moments the mingled exclamations, greetings, and questions were too broken and mixed to tell any of them much, but the first surprise over, the Merediths explained their presence.

"I knew from the baroness that you were at Colle, and bitter was the disappointment when I found you gone this morning. But my grief then makes me but the happier now."

"But how came ye here, lad?" questioned the squire.

"We were sent on a raid to Charlottesville, with orders to rejoin the main army at Point of Fork, and I was detached by Colonel Tarleton this morning to take this route, hoping to get more information concerning Lafayette's whereabouts and movements."

"I heard this fellow," said Mr. Meredith, indicating the still captive and moaning man, "who is a captain of militia, tell the men he was draughting that they were to march, as soon as embodied, to join the rebel army at Raccoon Ford."

"Hah! the junction with Wayne's force emboldens him to show us something more than his back at last. 'Tis all I wish to learn, and we can now take the shortest road to rejoin Lord Cornwallis. Strap me! but 't was a heaven-sent chance that we should come just in the nick o' time to rescue you. There shall be no more captivity, that I can promise you." He turned to the now reassembled squadron, and ordered, "Parole your prisoners, Captain Cameron, and let them go. You, Lieutenant Beatty, bring up the best extra mount you have, and arrange as comfortable a place as possible for the ladies in one of the baggage-waggons."

"A suggestion, major," spoke up another officer. "Sergeant McDonald reports that there is a chaise in the tavern barn, and —"

"Put horse to it, and have it out before you set fire to the buildings," interrupted Hennion.

"What!" ejaculated Mr. Meredith. "Art thou a major, Phil?"

"Ay, squire. I've fought my way up two grades since last we met."

There was a greater change in the officer than of rank, for his once long and ungainly frame had broadened and filled out into that of a well-formed, powerful man. His face, too, had lost its lankness, to its great improvement, for the features were strong, and, with the deep tan which the Southern campaigns had given it, had become, from being one of positive homeliness, one of decided distinction. But the most marked alteration was in his speech and bearing, for all trace of the awkward had disappeared from both; he spoke with facility and authority, and he sat his horse with soldierly erectness and ease.

The ladies were soon bestowed in the chaise, the bugle sounded, and the flying column resumed its movement. Little they saw of the commander all day, for he rode now with the foremost troop, and now with the rear one, keenly alert to all that was taking place, asking questions at each farmhouse as to roads, bridges, rivers, distances, the people, and everything which could be of value. Only when the heat of the day came, and they halted for a few hours' rest at a plantation, did he come to them, and then only for a brief word as to their accommodation. He offered Mrs. Meredith and Janice the best the house afforded, but, with keen recollections of their own sufferings, they refused to dispossess the women occupants from their home, and would accept in food and lodgings only what they had to spare. Indeed, though as far as possible it had been kept from their sight, the march had brought a realising sense to them, almost for the first time, of the full horror of the war, and made them appreciate that their own experience, however bad they had deemed it, was but that of hundreds. The day had been one long scene of rapine and destruction. At each plantation they had seen all serviceable horses seized, and the rest of the stock, young or old, slaughtered, all provisions of use to the army made prize of, and the



FIG. TALLEYAN.

remainder, with the buildings that held it, put to the torch, and the young crops of wheat, corn, and tobacco, so far as time allowed, destroyed. Under cover of all this, too, there was looting by the dragoons, which the officers could not prevent, try their best.

There was a still worse terror, of which, fortunately, the Merediths saw nothing. Large numbers of the negroes took advantage of the incursion, and indeed were encouraged by the cavalry, to escape from slavery by following in the rear of the column; and as the white men were either with the Virginia militia, or were in hiding away from the houses, the women were powerless to prevent the blacks from plundering, or from any other excess it pleased them to commit. The Old Dominion, the last State of the thirteen to be swept over by the foe, was harried as the Jerseys had been, but by troops made less merciful by many a fierce conflict, and by its own servitors, debased by slavery to but one degree above the brute. Only with death did the people forget the enormities of those few months, when Cornwallis's army cut a double swath from tide water almost to the mountains, and Tarleton's and Simcoe's cavalry rode whither they pleased; and the hatred of the British and the fear of their own slaves outlasted even the passing away of the generation which had suffered.

It was on the afternoon of the following day that the detachment effected a juncture with the main army, and so soon as Major Hennion had reported, Lord Cornwallis, who was quartered at Elk Hill, an estate of Jefferson's, sent word that he wished to see Mr. Meredith at once, and extended an invitation to them all to share the house. He questioned the squire for nearly an hour as to the whereabouts of the Convention prisoners, the condition of the State, and the feeling of the people.

"All you tell me tallies with such information as I have procured elsewhere," he ended; "and had I but a free hand I make certain I could destroy Lafayette and completely subjugate the State in one campaign."

"Surely, my Lord, you could not better serve the king. Virginia has been the great hot-bed of sedition, and if she were once smothered, the fire would quickly die out."

"Almost the very words I writ to Sir Henry, but he declares it out of the question to leave me the troops with which to effect it. As you no doubt are aware, a French force has been landed at Rhode Island, and is even now on its march to join Mr. Washington; and, by a fortunate interception of some of his despatches to Congress, we have full information that the united force intend an attack on New York. So I am ordered to fall down to a good defensive post on the Chesapeake and to send a material part of my army to his aid."

When finally the interview was ended, and Mr. Meredith asked one of the aides to take him to his room, it was explained that Mrs. Meredith and her daughter had been put in one and that he was to have a share of another.

"You'd have had the floor or a tent, sir," his guide told him, as he threw open the door, "but for Lord Clowes saying he'd take you in."

Surely enough, it was the commissary who warmly grasped the squire's hand as he entered, and who cried, "Welcome to ye, friend Meredith! I heard of your strange arrival from nowhere, and glad I was to be assured ye were still in the flesh and once more among friends."

"Ye've clear surprised my breath out of my windpipe," returned the squire. "Who'd have thought to find ye here?"

"And where else should I be, but where there's an army to be fed, and crops to feed them? I' faith, never was there a richer harvest field for one who knows how to garner it. Why, man, aside from the captures of tobacco, now worth a great price, and other gains, over six thousand pounds I've made in the last two years, by shipping niggers, who think they are escaping to freedom, to our West India islands, and selling them to the planters there. This war is a perfect gold mine."

"Little of that it's been to me," lamented his listener.

"Ye can make it such, an' it please ye. She perceived me not, but I saw your daughter as ye rode up, and though I thought myself well cured of the infatuation, poof! one gloat was enough to set my blood afire, as if I were but a boy of eighteen again. Lord Clowes, with a cool ninety thousand, is ready to make her fortune and yours."

"Nay, Clowes, ye know I've passed my word to Hennion, and —"

"Who'll not outlive the war, ye may make sure. The fellow's made himself known through the army by the way he puts himself forward in every engagement. Some one of these devilish straight-shooting riflemen will release that promise for ye."

"I trust not; but if it so falls, there'd still be a bar to your wish. The girl dislikes ye very —"

"Dost not know that is no bad beginning? Nay, man, see if I bring her not round, once I have a clear field. I've thought it out even now while I've waited for ye. We'll sail for New York on one of the ships that carries Lord Cornwallis's reinforcements to Clinton, and as 't will be some years still ere the country is entirely subdued, out of the question 't will be that ye go to Greenwood. I will resign my post, being now rich enough, and we'll all go to London, where I'll take a big house, and ye shall be my guests. Once let the girl taste of high life, with its frocks and jewels and carriages, and all that tempts the sex, and she'll quickly see their provider in a new light."

"'T is little ye know of my lass, Clowes."

"Tush! I know women to the very bottom; and is she more than a woman?"

Their conference was ended by the call to supper, and in the hallway the baron attempted as hearty a greeting with the ladies as he had with the squire. Though taken by surprise, a distant curtsy was all he gained from them, and do his best, he could get little of their conversation during the meal.

On rising, Philemon, who had been a guest at table, drew the squire to one side. "The legion is ordered on a foray to destroy the military stores at Albemarle Court-house, and in this hot weather we try to do our riding at night, to spare our cattle, so we shall start away about eleven o'clock. His Lordship tells me that the army will begin to fall down to the coast in a day or two, so it may be a some time before I see you again. Have you money?"

"A bare trifle, but I'll not further rob ye, lad, till I get to the end of my purse."

"Do not fear to take from me, sir. A major's pay is very different from a cornet's. 'T will make me feel easier, and, in fact, 't will be safer with you than with me," Phil said, as he forced a rouleau of coin into the squire's palm. Then, not waiting for Mr. Meredith's protests or thanks, he crossed to where Janice was talking with three of the staff, and broke in upon their conversation: "Janice, a soldier goes or stays not as he pleases, but as the bugle orders, and there is more work cut out for us, but this evening I am free. Wilt come and stroll along the river-bank for an hour?"

"Dash your impudence, Hennion!" protested one of the group. "Do you think you fellows of the cavalry can plunder everything? Pay no heed to him, Miss Meredith, I beg of you."

"Ay," echoed another, "'t is the artillery the major should belong to, for he'd do to repair the brass cannon."

The girl stood irresolute for a breath, then, though she coloured, she said steadily, "Certainly, if you wish it, Philemon."

While they were passing the rows of camp-fires and tents, the major was silent, but once these were behind them he said:—

"'T would be idle, Janice, to make any pretence of why I wished to see you apart. You must know it as well as I."

"I suppose I do, Philemon," assented the girl, quietly.

"A long time we've been parted, but not once has my love for you lessened, and— and in Philadelphia you held out a little hope that I've lived on ever since. You said that the squire held to his promise, and that— did you— do you still think as you—"

"Have you spoken to dad-da?"

"No. For—for I was afraid he'd force you against your will. Once I was eager to take you even so, but I hope you won't judge me for that. I was an unthinking boy then."

"We all make mistakes, Philemon, and would that I could outlive mine as well as you have yours," Janice answered gently.

"Then— then— you will?"

"If dad-da still— Before I answer—I— something must

be told that I wish — oh, how I wish, for your sake and for mine! — had never been. I gave — I tried to be truthful to you, Philemon, but, unknown to myself, some love I gave to — to one I need not name, and though I — though he quickly killed it, 't is but fair that you should know that the little heart — for I — I fear me I am cold by nature — I had to give was wasted on another. But if, after this confession, you still would have me for a wife, and dad-da and mom-my wish it, I will wed you, and try my best to be dutiful and loving."

"'T is all I ask," eagerly exclaimed Philemon, as he caught her hand, and drew her toward him. "Ah, Janice, if you but knew how I love —"

"Ho! there ye are," came the voice of the commissary not five paces away. "I saw ye go toward the river, and followed."

"My Lord, Miss Meredith and I are engaged in a private conversation, and cannot but take your intrusion amiss."

"Fudge, man, is not the night hot enough but ye must blaze up so? Nor is the river-bank your monopoly."

"Keep it all, then, and a good riddance to the society you enjoy it with. Come, Janice, we'll back to the house."

At the doorway Philemon held out his hand. "We ride away while you will be sleeping, but 't is a joyous heart you let me carry."

"I am glad if I — if you are happy," responded the girl, as she let him press her fingers. Then, regardless of the sentry, she laid her free hand on Phil's arm impulsively and imploringly, as she added, "Oh, Philemon, please — whatever else you are, please don't be hard and cruel to me."

"I'll try my best not to be, though 't is difficult for a soldier to be otherwise; but, come what may, I'll never pain or deny you knowingly, Janice."

"'T is all I beg. But be kind and generous, and I'll love you in time."

Rub-a-dub went the drums, sounding tattoo, and the beating brought several officers scurrying out of the house. Philemon kissed the girl's hand, and hurried away to his squadron.

Two days the army remained encamped at the Fork, then

by easy marches it followed the river down to Richmond, where a rest was taken. Once again getting in motion, it fell back on Williamsburg and halted, for it was now the height of summer, and the heat so intense that the troops were easily exhausted. Finally, the British retired across the James River, and took up a position at Portsmouth.

In the month thus spent, not once was Major Hennion able to get a word with Janice, for Lafayette followed closely upon the heels of the invaders until they were safe over the James, and there was constant skirmishing between the van and rear and two sharp encounters, which kept Tarleton's and Simcoe's cavalry, when they had rejoined, fully occupied in covering the retreat, while the Merediths and other loyalists who had joined the army travelled with the baggage in the advance.

The occupation of Portsmouth was brief, for upon the engineers reporting that the site was not one which could be fortified, the British general put his troops on board of such shipping as he could gather and transferred them bodily to Yorktown. Here he set the army, and the three thousand negroes who had followed them, leisurely to laying out lines of earthworks, that he might hold the post with the reduced number which would be left him after he detached the reinforcements needed at New York, and despatched a sloop-of-war to Clinton, with word that he but awaited the arrival of transports to send him whatever regiments he should direct.

If Hennion, by his constant service at the front, was helpless to assist his friends, Clowes, who was always with the baggage train, was unending in his favours. He secured them a stock of clothing, and assigned to them two admirable servants from the horde of runaway slaves; he promptly procured for them a more comfortable travelling carriage, and he made their lodgings a matter of daily concern, so that they always fared with the best, while his gifts of wine and other delicacies were almost embarrassingly frequent. At Yorktown, too, where the village of about sixty houses supplied but the poorest and scantiest accommodations for both man and beast, he managed to have the custom-house assigned for his own use, and then placed all the rooms the Merediths needed at their disposal. If Janice's preferences had been spoken and re-

garded, everything he did in their behalf would have been declined; but her mother's real need of the comforts of life, and her father's love of them, were arguments too strong for her own wishes, and by placing them under constant obligation to the baron made it impossible for her not to treat him with outward courtesy whenever he sought their company, which was with every opportunity. Yet it was in vain that the commissary plied her with his old-time arts of manner and tongue. Even the slow mind of the squire took note that he gained no ground with his daughter.

"'Tis a tougher task ye've undertaken even than ye counted upon," he said, one evening over the wine, as Janice left the table at the earliest possible instant.

"Tut! give me time. I'll bring her around yet."

"I warned ye the maid had ye deep in her bad books."

"What's a month? If a woman yields in that time, a man may save himself the parson's fee, and it please him."

"Still, though she is a good lass in most things, I must own to ye that she hath a strange vein of obstinacy in her, which she comes by from her mother."

"Then I'll use that same obstinacy to win her. Dost not know that every quality in a female is but a means by which to ensnare her? Let me once know a woman's virtues and frailties, and I'll make each one of them serve my suit."

"'Tis more than a month ye've been striving to win her regard."

"Ay; but for some reason, in Philadelphia I could ne'er keep my head when with her, and as often went back as forward, curse it! 'Better slip with foot than with tongue,' runs the old saying, and I did both with her. I've learned my lesson now, and once give me a clear field and ye shall see how 't will be."

The squire shook his head. "She's promised to Major Hennion, and after much folly and womanishness at last she's found her mind, and tells me she will cheerfully wed him."

"And how will the lot of ye live, man?" asked Clowes, crossly. "Hast not had word that Jersey has enacted a general act of forfeiture and escheatage 'gainst all Royalists?"

"That I'd not," answered the squire, pulling a long face. "I suppose that has taken Greenwood from us?"

"Ay, for I saw the very advertisement of the sale, and have not told ye before merely to spare you distress. And 't will strip Hennion of his acres as well, I take it. Wilt deliberately marry her to a penniless man?"

"Boxely never was his, and I doubt not his scamp of a father will find some way to save it to him. I'll not tarry longer, for 't is ill news ye have just broke to me, and I must carry it to Matilda. It gives us but a black future to which to look forward."

Mr. Meredith gone from the room, the commissary took from his pocket a copy of Gaines' "New York Gazette and Weekly Mercury," which had come to him but that morning, and re-read an account it contained, taken from the "New Jersey Gazette," of the sale of Greenwood to Esquire Hennion. "'T is my devil's ill luck that he, of all men, should buy it," he muttered. "However, if I can but get them to New York, away from this dashing dragoon, and then persuade them to cross the Atlantic, 't will matter not who owns it." He rose, stretched himself, and as he did so, he repeated the words: —

"I and chance, against any two;
Time and I against chance and you."



LIX

TRAITORS IN THE REAR

ON a broiling August day in the year 1781, an officer rode along the Raritan between Middle-Brook and Brunswick. As he approached the entrance of Greenwood, he slowed his horse, and after a moment's apparent hesitation, finally turned him through the gateway. Once at the porch he drew rein and looked for a time at the paintless clap-boards, broken window-panes, and tangle of vines and weeds, all of which told so plainly the story of neglect and desertion. Starting his steed, he passed around to the kitchen door, and rapped thrice with the butt of a pistol without gaining any reply. Wheeling about, he was returning to the road when an idea seemed to come to him, for, altering direction, he pulled on his bridle, and turned his horse into the garden, now one dense overgrowth. Guiding him along one of the scarcely discernible paths, he checked him at a garden seat, and leaning in his saddle plucked half a dozen sprays of honeysuckle from the vine which surmounted it. He touched them to his lips, and gave his horse the spur. He held the sprays in his hand as he rode, occasionally raising them to his face until he was on the edge of Brunswick village, then he slipped them into his sword sash.

Giving his horse into the hands of the publican at the tavern, he crossed the green to the parsonage and knocked. "Is Parson McClave within?" he inquired of the hired girl.

"Come in, come in, Colonel Brereton," called a voice from the sitting-room; "and all the more welcome are you that I did not know you were in these parts."

"My regiment was ordered across the river to Chatham last week, to build ovens for the coming attack on New York, and I took a few hours off to look up old friends," Brereton an-

swered in a loud voice. "Where can we safely talk?" he whispered.

"I'll leave my sermon even as it is," said the presbyter, "and it being hot here, let us into the meeting-house yard, where we'll get what breeze comes up the river. Eager I am to learn of what the army is about."

Once they were seated among the gravestones, the colonel said: "I need not tell you that five times in the last two months the continental post-riders have been waylaid 'twixt Brunswick and Princeton by scoundrels in the pay of the British. Only once, fortunately, was there information of the slightest importance, but 't is something that must be stopped; and General Washington, knowing of my familiarity with this neighbourhood, directed me to discover and bring the wretches to punishment. Because I can trust you, I come to ask if you have any information or even inkling that can be of service?"

"Surely, man, you do not suspect any one in my parish?" replied the clergyman.

Brereton smiled slightly. "There is little doubt that the secret Tories of Monmouth County are concerned; but there is some confederate in Brunswick, who, whether he takes an active share, supplies them with information concerning the routes, days, and hours of the posts. I see, however, you have no light to shed on the matter."

"'T is all news to me," answered the minister, shaking his head. "I knew that there was some illicit trading with New York, but that we had real traitors amongst us I never dreamed."

"Trap them I will, before many weeks," asserted the officer. "If in no other way, I'll—"

The sentence was interrupted by the clang of the church bell above them.

"Bless me!" cried McClave, springing to his feet. "Your call has made me forget the auction, which, as justice of the peace, I must attend."

"What auction?"

"For the sale of Greenwood under the statute."

The officer frowned. "I feared it when I read of the passing of a general act of forfeiture and escheatage," he muttered, "though I still hoped 't would not extend to them."

Together the two men crossed the green to the town hall, where now a crowd, consisting of almost every inhabitant of the village and of the outlying farms, was assembled. The officer, a scowl on his face, paused in the doorway and glanced about, then threaded his way to where two negresses stood weeping, and began talking to them. Meanwhile, the clergyman, pushing on through the throng, joined Esquire Hennion and Bagby, who for some reason were suspiciously eying each other on the platform.

"I intend to bid on the property, McClave," announced the Honourable Joseph, "so 't is best that the squire takes charge of the sale."

"Thet 'ere is jes what I'm a-calkerlatin' ter do, likewise," responded Hennion, with an ugly glance at Joe, "so I guess yer'll hev ter assoom the runnin' of the perseedins yerself, paason."

There was a moment's consultation, and then Justice McClave stepped forward and read in succession the text of an act of the New Jersey Assembly, a proclamation of the Governor, and an advertisement from the "New Jersey Gazette" by which documents, and by innumerable whereases and therefore, it was set forth that a state of war existed with Great Britain; that sundry inhabitants of the State, forgetful of their just duty and allegiance, had aided and abetted the common enemy; that by these acts they placed themselves outside of the laws of the commonwealth, their property became forfeited, and was ordered sold for the benefit of the State; that the property of one Lambert Meredith, who had been attainted, both by proclamation and by trial, of high treason, was therefore within the act; and, finally, that there would be sold to the highest bidder, at the court-house of the town of Brunswick, on the sixteenth day of August next ensuing, the said property of the said Lambert Meredith; namely, "Two likely negro women, who can cook and spin," and thirty thousand acres of choice arable farm and wood lands under cultivation lease, with one house, one stable, and corn-cribs and other outbuildings thereto appertaining.

It took not five minutes to sell the sobbing slaves, the tavern-keeper buying Sukey for the sum of forty-one pounds,

and the clergyman announcing himself at the end of the bidding as the purchaser of Peg for thirty-nine pounds, six.

Then amidst a silence which told of the interest of the crowd, the auctioneer read out a description of the bounds and acreage of Greenwood, and asked for bids.

"Nine thousand pounds," instantly offered Bagby.

"Five hundred more," rejoined Hennion.

"Ten thousand," snapped Joe.

"Five hundred more," snarled his rival bidder.

"Eleven thousand," came Joe's counter bid.

"Thirteen thousand."

"And five hundred."

"Fifteen thousand."

Bagby hesitated, scowling, then said, "Sixteen thousand."

"Seventeen."

"Seventeen, five."

"Yer might ez waal quit, Joe," interjected Squire Hennion.

"I hez more 'n' yer hev, an' I intends ter buy it. Nineteen 's my bid, pa'son."

"Twenty," burst out Joe, malignantly.

"Twenty-one."

"Twenty-five."

Hennion's face in turn grew red with anger, and he half rose, his fist clinched, but recollecting himself he resumed his seat.

"Going at twenty-five," announced McClave. "Will any one give more?"

A breathless pause came, while Bagby's countenance assumed a look of sudden anxiety. "I did n't say twenty-five," he quickly denied; "I said twenty-two."

A wave of contradiction swept through the hall.

Nothing daunted, the honourable Joseph repeated his assertion.

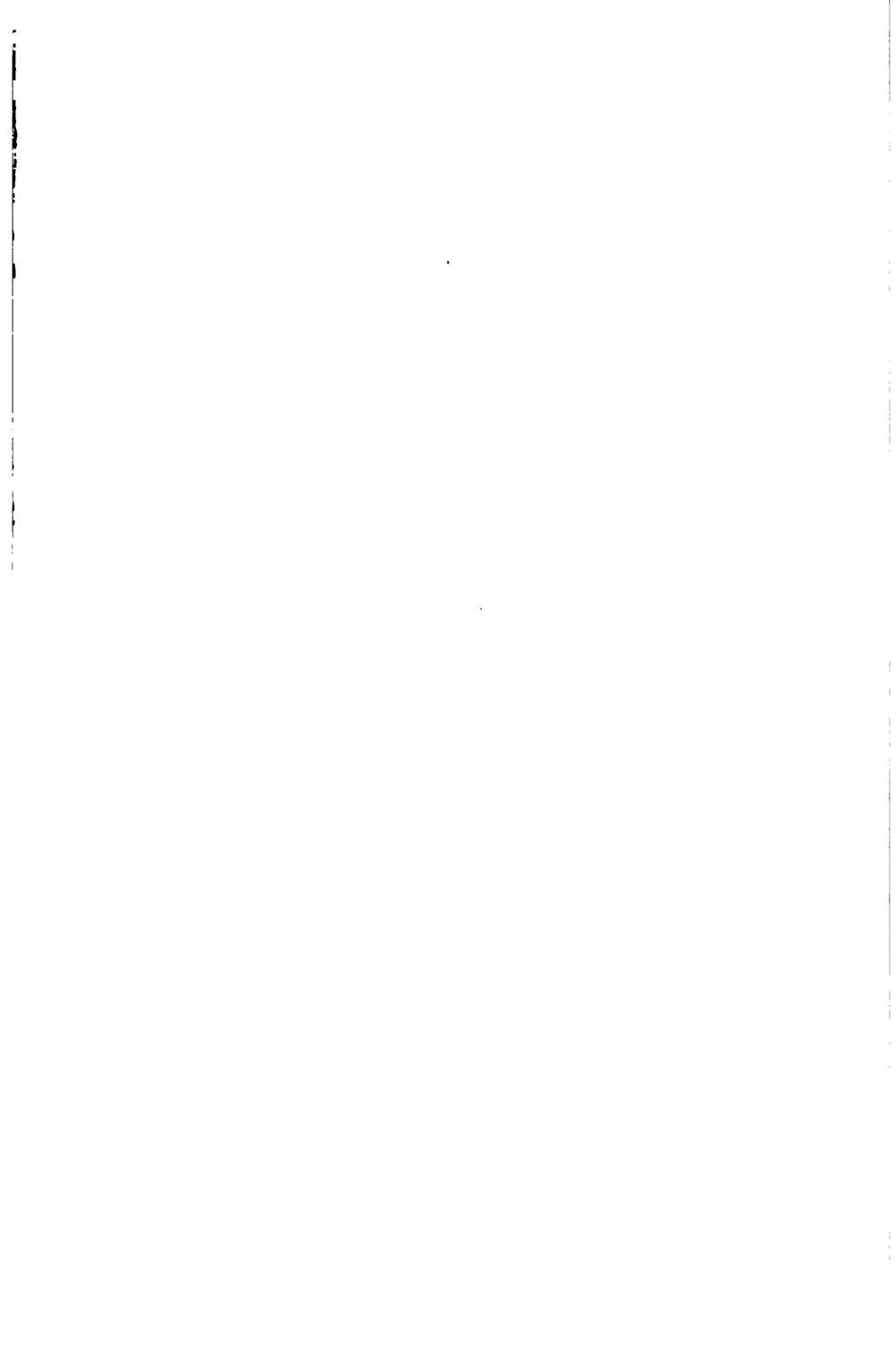
"He, he, he!" chuckled Hennion, "thet comes of biddin' more money than yers hev."

"We 'll call it twenty-two thousand," said McClave, "since Mr. Bagby persists. Will you give any more?"

"One hundred more," said Hennion; and nobody offering above him, it was knocked down at that price.



“ ‘ Nine thousand pounds ! ’ instantly offered Bagby.”



As the sale was declared completed, Bagby rose. "At least, I made you pay double for it," he growled spitefully to his competitor.

"Yer did, consarn yer," was Hennion's reply; but then a smile succeeded the angry look on the shrewd face. "I did n't pay more 'n a third of what 't is wuth, then."

"T will be a dear buy, that I warn you," retorted Joseph, angrily. "I'll pay you off yet for bidding me out of it."

"Yer be keeful what yer do, or I'll do some payin' off myself," warned Hennion.

Brereton, who had stayed through the sale, with a contemptuous shrug of the shoulders, walked over to the ordinary. Here he ate a silent supper, and then mounting his horse set off on his evening ride back to his regiment.

Half-way between Brunswick and Greenwood, while his thoughts were dwelling on the day's doings, and on what effect it would have on those far away in the mountains of Virginia, he was brought back to the present by hearing his name called in a low voice from behind a wall.

"Who 's that?" he demanded, halting his horse.

"Are you alone?"

"Yes," replied the officer, as he drew out a pistol from the holster.

"No occasion for that, colonel," said Joe Bagby's unmistakable accents, as the man climbed over the stones and came forward. "It 's me," he announced. "Just walk your horse slow, so I can keep beside you, for I 've something to tell you, and I don't want to stand still here in the road."

"Well, what is it?" questioned Brereton, as he started his horse walking.

"I rather guess you came to town on business, did n't you?"

"Perhaps."

"Might be something to do with the sale of Greenwood."

"Possibly."

"But more likely 't was something to do with public matters?"

"Well?"

"What would you give to catch them as was concerned in the killing of the post-riders?"

Not a motion or sound did Jack give to betray himself. "That lies outside of my work," he said. "'T is the business of the secret service."

"Do you mean that, if I can put you in the way of laying hands on the whole gang, you won't do it?"

"If you choose to tell me what you know, I'll report it, for what it's worth, to headquarters, and General Washington will take such actions as he judges fit."

"There won't be time for that," asserted Joe. "It's to-morrow the thing's to be played."

"What thing?"

"The robbing of the mail."

"How know you that?"

"Well, being in politics, colonel, I make it my business to know most things that is happening in the county. Now, I've been ferreting for some time to get at this post-riding business, and at last I've found out how it's done. And they're going to do it again to-morrow night just this side of Rocky Hill."

For a moment Brereton was silent. "How is it done?" he asked.

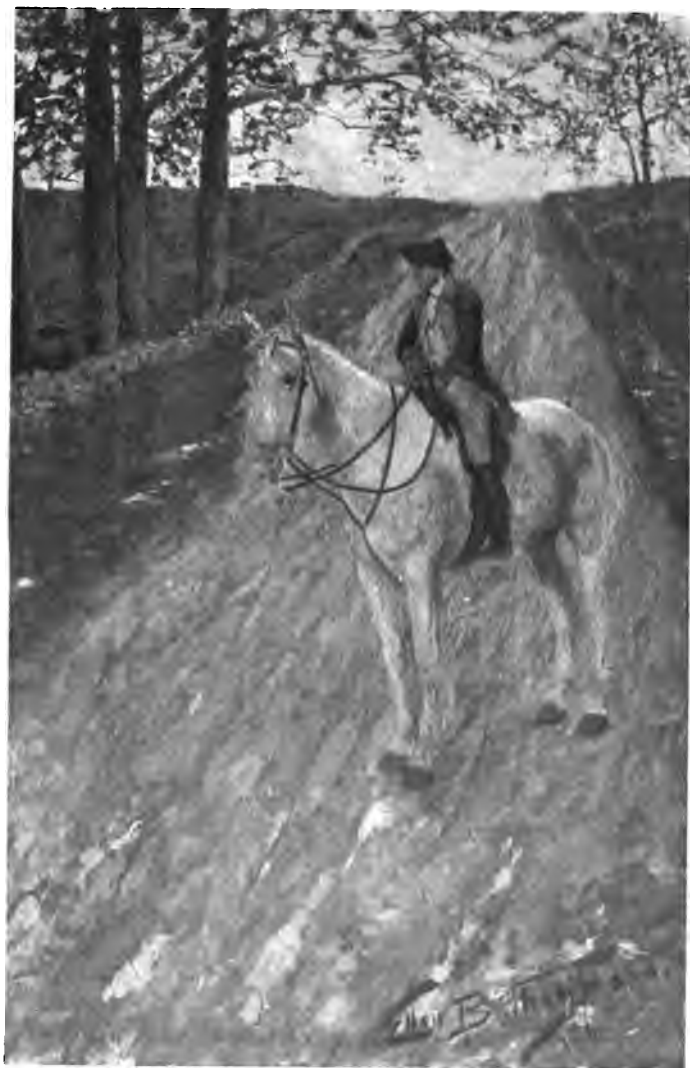
"It's this way. One of Moody's gang is working with Squire Hennion as hired man; and when Hennion knows that a rider is due, he drops into the ordinary, and, casual like, finds out all he can as to when he rides on, and by what road. Then he hurries off home and tells his man, and he goes and tells Moody, who gets his men together and does the business."

"I see. And how can we know where they set the ambush, so as to set a counter one?"

"It's easy as can be. When they have the mail, it's to Hennion's barn they all goes, where they cut it open and takes out everything as Clinton will pay for, and sends it off at once on one of the boats of provisions as old Hennion is stealing into New York two or three times a week."

"Ah, that's where he's got the money to buy Greenwood, is it?"

"Yes; I tell you he's a traitor if there ever was one, colonel. But I guess he'll be nabbed now. All you've got to do is to



“ ‘ Who’s that ? ’ he demanded, balking his horse.”

hide your men in the barn to-morrow night, and you 'll take the whole lot red-handed."

"And I suppose you tell me this to get your revenge for this afternoon."

"Just a little, colonel; but don't forget I'm a patriot, who's always trying to serve his country. Now I'll tell you how we'll do it. You bring your men down t' other side of the river to Meegan's place; and as soon as it's dark, I'll come across the river in a sloop I own and will bring you right over to Hennion's wharf, from which it will be easy to steal into his barn without no one seeing us."

Brereton made no answer for a minute, then said, "Very well; I'll adopt your plan."

"I suppose there'll be some reward coming to me, colonel?"

"Undoubtedly," replied Jack, but with a twitch of contempt. "Is that all?"

"That's enough to do the business, I guess," rejoined Joe. "About nine clock I'll allow to be at Meegan's," he said.

Without a word of assent, Jack quickened his pace. When he had gone fifty feet he looked back, but already the informer had disappeared. "What dirty work every man must do on occasion!" he muttered. "I'd suspect the scoundrel but for what I heard this afternoon, and he has it all so pat that he's probably been in it himself more or less. However, it promises well; and 'twill be a service of the utmost importance if we can but break up the murdering gang and bring them to justice, for 't is no time to have Clinton reading all our secrets."

It was midnight when Brereton trotted into Chatham and dismounting from his horse walked wearily into his tent.

His servant, sleeping on the floor, waked, and hastily rose. "A despatch, sir, from headquarters," he said, taking a paper from his pocket.

"When did it arrive?" demanded Jack, as he examined the seal, to make sure that it had not been tampered with, and then broke the letter open.

"Four hours ago, sir, by special courier."

What Brereton read was this: —

HEADQUARTERS, August 16, 1781.

SIR, — *Should you have already taken steps looking to the discovery and seizure of those concerned in the late robbing of the mails, you will hold all such proceedings in abeyance until further orders. For military reasons it is even desired that the post-bag which will be sent through to-morrow should fall into the hands of the enemy, and you will act accordingly. I have the honour to be,*

Yr. Obed^t. hble Serv^t.

GO. WASHINGTON.

To COLONEL BRERETON,
*Commanding the 3^d. New Jersey Regt.,
Stationed at Chatham.*

Jack whistled softly, then smiled, "Joe will have a long wait," he chuckled. "I wonder what's up."

He knew three days later, for orders came to him to put his regiment in motion and march for Philadelphia, and the bearer of the despatch added that the united forces of Washington and Rochambeau were already across the Hudson and would follow close upon his heels.

"We've made Sir Henry Clinton buy the information that we intend to attack New York," the aide told him, "and now we are off to trap Cornwallis in Virginia."



LX

THE SPINNING OF THE WEB

OWING to the impossibility of the horses of Tarleton's and Simcoe's legions being ferried on the small boats which transported the foot troops from Portsmouth to Yorktown, they had been left behind the rest of the army, with directions to put themselves on board the frigate and sloops of war and effect a landing at Hampton or thereabouts. This gave the commissary still more time free from the presence of Major Hennion, but he had little reason to think it of advantage to him. At meal hours, since they had but one table, Janice could not avoid his company, but otherwise she very successfully eluded him. Much of each day she spent with her mother, who was ailing, and kept her room, and she made this an excuse for never remaining in those shared by all in common. When she went out of doors, which, owing to the August heats, was usually towards evening, she always took pains that the baron should not be in a position to join her, or even to know of her having sallied forth. With the same object, she generally, as soon as she left the house, hurried through the little village and past the rows of tents of the encampment on the outskirts and the lines of earthworks upon which the soldiery and negroes were working, until she reached the high point of land to the east, which opened on Chesapeake Bay, where, feeling secure, she could enjoy herself in the orchard of the Moore house, in the woods to the southward, or with sewing or a book, merely sit on the extreme point gazing off at the broad expanse of water.

She was thus engaged on the afternoon of the 28th of August, when the rustle of footsteps made her look up from her book, only to find that her precautions for once were

futile, as it was the commissary who was hastening toward her.

"I needed this," he began, "to prove to me that you were not a witch, as well as a bewitcher, for, verily, I had begun to think that by some black art ye flew out of your window at will. Nay," he protested, as Janice, closing her book, rose, "call ye this fair treatment, Miss Meredith? Surely, if ye have no gratitude yourself, ye should at least remember what I am doing for your father and mother, and not seek to shun me as if I were the plague, rather than a man nigh mad with love for ye."

"'Tis that very fact, Lord Clowes," replied Janice, gravely, "which has forced avoidance of you upon me. Surely you must understand that, promised now as I am to another, both by my father's word and by my own, your suit cannot fail to distress me?"

"Is 't possible that, to please others, thee intends, then, to force thyself to marry this long-legged dragoon?" protested Clowes. "Hast thy father not told thee of thy own loss of Greenwood and of his undoubted loss of Boxely?"

"Our loss of property, my Lord, but makes it all the more important that we save our good name; and if our change of circumstance does not alter Major Hennion's wishes, as I am certain it will not, we shall keep faith with him."

"Even though Lord Clowes offers ye position, wealth, and a home for your parents, not a one of which he can give?"

"Were I not promised, Lord Clowes, nothing could induce me to marry you."

"Why not?" questioned the baron, warmly.

"Methinks, if you but search the past, sir, you cannot for an instant be in doubt. Obligations you have heaped upon us at moments, for every one of which I thank you, but never could I bring myself to feel respect, far less affection for you."

The commissary, with knitted brows, started to speak, but checked himself and took half a dozen strides. Returning, he said:—

"Miss Meredith, 't is not just to judge the future by the past. Can ye not understand that what I did in Philadelphia,

ay, every act of mine at which ye could take offence in our whole acquaintance, has been done on heated impulse? If ye but knew a man's feelings when he loves as I love, and finds no response to his passion in the object of it, ye would pardon my every act."

"'Tis not alone your conduct to us, Lord Clowes, but as well that to others which has confirmed me in my conviction."

"Ye would charge me with—"

"'Tis not I alone, my Lord, that you have deceived or injured, and you cannot plead for those the excuse you plead to me."

"'Tis the circumstances of my parole of which ye speak?" demanded the baron.

"Of that and other things which have come to my knowledge."

Again the suitor hesitated before saying, with a suggestion of glibness: "Miss Meredith, every ounce of blame ye put upon my conduct I accept honestly and regretfully, but did ye but know all, I think ye would pity rather than judge me in that heart which seems open to every one but me. From the day my father died in the debtor's prison and I was thrown a penniless boy of twelve upon the world, it has been one long fight to keep head above water, till I got this appointment. The gentlemen of the army have told ye that I was a government spy, I doubt not. I wonder what they would have been in my straits! Think ye any man is spy by choice? Am I worse than the men who hired me to do the work, and who gained praise and rewards, even to the blue ribbon, by the information I had got for them, while only scorn and shame was my portion? Think ye a life given to indirection and worming, to prying and scheming, is one of self-choice? Hitherto I have done the dirty work of ministers,— ay, of kings; but from the day I leave this country, that is over and done with for ever, and their once tool, now rich, will take his place among the very best of England's peers, for money will buy a man anything in London nowadays. 'Tis not alone that I love ye nigh to desperation that I beg your love; 'tis that your love will help to make me the honest-living man

I ambition to be. But grant the longing of my life, and I'll pledge ye happiness. Ye shall write your own marriage settlement, a house, carriages, jewels — "

"Indeed, Lord Clowes, even were my feelings less strong, you ask for what is now impossible."

"Because your father, with a short-sightedness that is well-nigh criminal, has tied ye to this fellow! Can't ye perceive that the greatest service ye can render him will be to relieve him of the promise he has not the courage to end? In a six-months he'll bless ye for the deed, if ye will but do it."

Almost as if he had come to protect his rights, the voice of Major Hennion broke in upon them. "Everywhere have I sought you for upwards of an hour," he said, as he hurried toward them, "and began to fear that some evil had befallen you." He caught Janice's hand eagerly and kissed it.

"But when did you arrive?" exclaimed the girl.

"The legions were landed at Hampton Road this morning and reached camp an hour gone," explained the major. Still retaining her hand, he turned to Clowes and said, "If I understood you aright, my Lord, you told me you knew not where Miss Meredith was to be found?"

"And Miss Meredith will bear me out in the statement, sir, though I am quite willing that my word should stand by itself," retorted the commissary, tartly. "Nor am I in the habit of having it questioned by colonial striplings," he added insultingly.

"Nor am I—" began Philemon, heatedly; but Janice checked him by laying her free hand on his arm.

"'Tis naught to take umbrage at, Phil," she said dissuadingly, "and do not by quarrelling over a foolish nothing spoil my pleasure in seeing you."

"That I'll not," acceded the major, heartily. "Ah, Janice," he cried, unable to contain himself even before the baron, "if you knew the thrill your words give me. Are you truly glad to see me?"

"Yes, Phil, or I would not say so," answered the girl, ingenuously.

Lord Clowes, a scowl on his face, turned from the two, to avoid sight of Hennion's look of gladness. This brought him

gazing seaward, and he gave an exclamation. "Ho! What's here?"

The two faced about at his question, to see, just appearing from behind the curve of the land to the southward, a full-rigged ship, one mass of canvas from deck to spintle-heads, and with a single row of ports which bespoke the man-of-war.

"'T is a frigate," announced Clowes, "and no doubt sent to convoy the transports we have been awaiting. Yes; there comes another. 'T is the fleet, beyond question," he continued, as the first vessel having opened from the land, the bowsprit of a second began to appear.

The three stood silent as the two ships towering pyramids of sails, making them marvels of beauty, swept onward with slow dignity across the mouth of the York River, at this point nearly three miles wide, toward the Gloucester shore. Before they had gone a quarter of a mile, a third and larger vessel came sweeping into view, her two rows of ports showing her to be a line-of-battle ship. Barely was she clear of the land when a string of small flags broke out from her mizzen rigging, and almost as if by magic, the yard arms of all three vessels were alive with men, and royals, top gallants, and mainsails with machine-like precision were clewed up and furled, and each ship, stripped of all but its topsails, rounded to, with its head to the wind.

"That is a strange manoeuvre," remarked Philemon. "Why stop they outside, instead of sailing up the river?"

"They've hove to, no doubt, to wait a pilot, being strangers to the waters," surmised Clowes, wheeling and looking up the river townwards. "Ay, there goes some signal from the 'Charon's' truck," he went on, as the British frigate anchored off the town displayed three flags at her masthead.

Janice, thankful for the diversion the arrivals had caused, said something to Philemon in a low voice, and they set out toward the town. Not noticing the obvious attempt to escape from his society, or to outward appearance perturbed, the baron put himself alongside the two, and walked with them until the custom-house was reached.

"Will you come in, Philemon, and see dad-da and mommy?" questioned the girl, as the three halted at the doorway.

As she spoke, an orderly, who a moment before had come out of headquarters, made towards the major, and, saluting, said, "Colonel Tarleton directs that you report at headquarters without delay, sir."

"My answer is made for me, Janice," sighed Philemon. "I fear me 't is some vidette duty, and that once again we are doomed to part, just as I thought my hour had come. Many more of such disappointments will turn me from a soldier into a Quaker. However, 't is possible his Lordship wants but to put some questions, and, if so, I'll be with you shortly." He crossed the street and entered the Nelson house.

Shown by the orderly to the room where Cornwallis was, he found with him his colonel and a man in the uniform of a naval officer.

"Ah, here he is," said the British general. "Major Hennon, the three ships which have taken station at the mouth of the river pay no heed to the 'Charon's' signals, nor are theirs to be read by our book, so 't is feared that they are French ships. As 't is impossible to believe they would thus boldly venture into the bay if alone, we wish to know if there are others below. Furnish Lieutenant Foley with a mount, and, with an escort of a troop, guide him over the road you came to-day to some spot where a view of the roadstead at Old Point Comfort is to be commanded." Speaking to the naval officer, he enjoined, "You will carefully observe any shipping there may be, sir, and of what force, and report to me with the least possible delay."

It was a little after ten o'clock on the following day when a troop of hot and weary-looking horses and men clattered along the main street of the town and drew up in front of headquarters. Throwing himself from the saddle, Major Hennon hurried into the house. The moment he was in the presence of Cornwallis, he said: "'T is as you surmised, general. Between thirty and forty sail stretch from Lynnhaven Bay to the mouth of the James, and though 't was difficult to exactly estimate their force, they are mostly men of war, and some even three-deckers."

"Beyond question 't is the French West India fleet," burst



"The three stood silent as the two ships swept onward."

from Cornwallis. For a moment he was silent, then sternly demanded, "Where is Lieutenant Foley?"

"The gentlemen of the navy, sir, are more used to oak than to leather, and we set him such a pace that twelve miles back he could no longer sit his saddle, and we left him leading his horse, thinking this information could not be brought you too soon."

"It but proves the old saying that 'Ill news has wings,'" replied the earl, steadily, as he walked to the window and looked out into the garden. Here he stood silently for so long that finally Hennion spoke.

"I beg your pardon, general," he said, "but am I dismissed?"

All the reply Cornwallis made him was to ask, "When you first came amongst us, major, you spoke with the barbaric provincialism and nasal twang of your countrymen, but in your years with us you have lost them. Could you upon occasion resume both?"

"Indeed, my Lord," replied the officer, smiling, "'t is even yet a constant struggle to keep from it."

"The word you bring must be got to Clinton without question of fail and with the least possible delay. Are you willing to volunteer for a service of very great risk?"

"Does your Lordship for a moment question it?"

"Not I. To-night we will try to steal a small sloop out of the river with a despatch for Clinton; but we must not place our whole dependence on this means, and a second must be sent him overland. Get you a meal, sir, and a fresh horse, and from some civilian or negro procure such clothes as are fitting for a travelling peddler. I will order you a pack and a stock of such things as are appropriate from the public stores, and you shall at once be rowed across the river and must make your way as best you can northward to New York. Dost understand?"

"Ay, my Lord," replied Major Hennion, his hand already on the door-latch.

Left alone, Cornwallis stood for a moment, his lips pressed together, then summoning an aide, he gave him certain directions, after which, going to his writing-desk, he pulled

out a drawer and from it took quite a batch of Continental and State currency. Seating himself at his desk, he laid one of the notes upon it, and taking his penknife he very neatly and dexterously split the bill through half its length. Taking from his pocket a wallet, he drew from it a sheet of paper covered with numbers and syllables, which was indorsed, "Cipher No. 1." Writing on a scrap of paper a few words, he then alternately looked at what he had penned and at the cipher, taking down on one of the inner surfaces of the bill a series of numbers. Scarcely had he done his task when a knock came at the door, and in response to his summons a negress entered.

"'Scuse me, your Lordship," she said with a bob. "De captain, he say youse done want a leetle flour gum."

"Yes. Give it to me and leave the room," answered the earl.

Touching his finger in the saucer she had brought, Cornwallis rubbed it inside the split along the three edges, and then laying the bill on his desk, he patted the edges where they had been split, together, wiping them clean with his handkerchief. Running over the pile of currency, he sorted out some fifty notes, then taking a sheet of paper, he began a letter.

Before the earl had finished what he was writing, he was again interrupted, and the new-comer proved to be Major Hennion, clothed in an old suit of butternut-coloured linen. And as if in laying aside his red coat, shorts, and boots he had as well laid aside military rank, he seemed to have already reverted to his old slouch.

"Good," exclaimed Cornwallis, as he rose. "Are your other preparations all made?"

"Every one, general; and my horse and pack are already at the river-side."

The earl took the pile of sorted bills from his desk and handed them to Hennion. "There is the money to pay your way," he said, "all Continental Loan office or Virginia currency, save one of North Carolina for forty shillings, which on no account are you to part with, even if any one in the States to the northward will accept it, for I have split it open and



"The new-comer proved to be Major Hennion, clothed in an old suit of butternut-coloured linen."

written within it to Sir Henry Clinton the news I have to tell. Say to him that a few moments in water will serve to part the edges where they have been gummed together. I give you the note, that if you are caught, you may still find some means to send it on. But lest by mischance it should be lost or taken from you, and you should yet be able to reach New York, I have here the words I have written in cipher within the bill. Have you a good memory?"

"For facts, if not for words, my Lord."

The general took up from his desk the little memorandum he had written before using his cipher and read out: "An enemy's fleet within the Capes. Between thirty and forty ships of war, mostly large." "Spare not your speed, sir, yet take no unnecessary risk," ended the earl, as he held out his hand.

As Hennion took it, he said: "I will endeavour not to fail your Lordship in either respect; in going, however, I have one favour to crave of you. I leave behind me my promised bride, Miss Meredith; and I beg of you that she shall not want for any service that your Lordship can render her, or that I could do were I but here."

"Tis given," promised the earl, and on the word Hennion hurried from the room. Crossing the street, he knocked at the custom-house, and of the servant inquired, "Is Miss Meredith within?"

"No, sir," replied the soldier.

"Where is she?"

"I know not, sir. She left the house an hour ago."

With something suspiciously like an oath, the major turned away and, hurrying along the street, descended that which sloped down the bluff to the river. Here stood an officer, while in the water lay a flatboat which already held, besides two rowers, a horse and a pair of fat saddle-bags. Without a word Phil jumped in and the rowers struck their oars into the water.

At the same time that Major Hennion's party had been despatched to gain news of the fleet, other troops of Tarleton's and Simcoe's cavalry had been thrown out on scouting parties across the peninsula to the James, and the following day they

brought word that the French were busily engaged in landing troops from their ships at Jamestown, with the obvious intention of effecting a junction with Lafayette's brigades, which were at Williamsburg. A council of war was held that evening to debate whether the British force should not march out and attack them ; but it was recognised that even if they completely crushed the French and Americans, they had themselves made escape southward impossible by the care with which they had destroyed the bridges and ferries in their march into Virginia, while if they fled northward, they would certainly have to fight Washington's army long before they could reach New York. It was therefore unanimously voted that the least hazardous course was to remain passive in their present position.

Five days after this decision, a deserter from Lafayette's camp came into the British lines, bringing with him the news that it was openly talked in Williamsburg that Washington and Rochambeau, with their armies, were coming to join the troops already in Virginia. Nor were the British long able to continue their doubting of his assertions, for a Tory brought in the same tale, and with it a copy of the " Baltimore Journal," which printed the positive statement that the Northern army was on the march southward and was already arrived at Wilmington. A second council of war was therefore summoned to debate once again their difficulties ; but ere the general and field officers had met, a schooner, eluding the French vessels which blockaded the mouth of the river, arrived from New York, bringing a despatch from Sir Henry Clinton, in which he assured the encircled general that the British fleet would quickly sail to relieve him, and that he himself, with four thousand men, would follow close upon its heels. The order for the council was therefore recalled ; and Cornwallis turned the whole energies of the force under his command to strengthening his lines and in other ways making ready to resist the gathering storm.



LXI

IN THE TOILS

ON the morning of the 6th of October, twelve thousand American and French soldiers lay encamped in the form of a broad semi-circle almost a mile from the British earthworks about Yorktown. Still nearer, in a deep ravine, above which were some outworks that had been abandoned by the British on the approach of the allies, were the outposts; and these, lacking tents, had hutted themselves with boughs. Intermittently came the roar of a cannon from the British lines, and those in the hollow could occasionally see and hear a shell as it screeched past them overhead; but they gave not one-tenth the heed to it that they gave to the breakfast they were despatching. Indeed, their sole grumblings were at the meagreness of the ration which had been dealt out to them the night before ere they had been marched forward into their present position; and as a field officer, coming from the American camp, descended into the ravine, these found open expression.

"'T is mighty fine fer the ginral ter say in the ginral orders that he wants us if attacked ter rely on the bagonet," spoke up one of the murmurers loud enough to make it evident that he intended the officer to overhear him; "but no troops kin fight on a shred o' salt pork and a mouthful of collards."

The officer halted, and speaking more to all those within hearing than to the man, said: "You got as good as any of the Continental regiments, boys, and better than some."

"That may be, kun'l," answered the complainant, "but how about the dandies?"

"Yes," assented the officer. "We sent the French regiments all the flour and fresh meat the commissaries could lay

hands on, I grant you. Is there one of you who would have kept it from them for his own benefit?"

"P'raps not," acknowledged another, "but that don't make it any the less unfairsome."

"Remember they come to help us, and are really our guests. Nor are they accustomed to the privation we know too well. General Washington has surety that you can fight on an empty stomach, for you 've done it many a time, but he is not so certain of the French."

The remark was greeted with a general laugh, which seemed to dissipate the grievance.

"Lord!" exclaimed a corporal; "them fine birds do need careful tending."

"T ain't ter be wondered at thet the Frenchies is so keerful ter bring their tents with 'em," remarked a third. "Whatever would happen ter one o' them Soissonnais fellers, with his rose-coloured facings an' his white an' rose feathers, if he had ter sleep in a bowery along o' us? Some on 'em looks so pretty, thet it don't seem right ter even trust 'em out in a heavy dew." As he ended, the speaker looked down at his own linen overalls. "T ain't no shakes they laughs a bit at us an' won't believe we are really snogers."

"T is for us to make them laugh the other way before we 've done Cornwallis's business," remarked the officer. "But make up your minds to one thing, boys, if their caps are full of feathers and their uniforms more fit for a ball-room than for service, these same fine-plumaged birds can fight; and there must be no lagging if we are to prove ourselves their betters, or even their equals."

"We 'll show 'em what the Jarsey game-cocks kin do, an' don't you be afeared, kun'l."

As the assertion was made, a group of officers appeared on the brow of the ravine, and the colonel turned and went forward to meet them as they descended.

"How far in advance are your pickets, Colonel Brereton?" one of them asked.

"About three hundred paces, your Excellency."

"And is the ground open?" demanded a second of the party, with a markedly French accent.

"There is some timber cover, General du Portail, but 't is chiefly open and rolling."

"We wish, sir, to advance as far as can be safely effected," said Washington, "and shall rely on you for guidance."

"This way, sir," answered Brereton; and the whole party ascended out of the hollow through a side ravine which brought them into a clump of poplars occupied by a party of skirmishers, and which commanded a view of the British earthworks. Halting at the edge of the timber, glasses were levelled, and each man began a study of the enemy's lines. Scarcely had they taken position when a puff of smoke rose from one of the redoubts, and a shell came screeching towards them, passing high enough to cut the branches of the trees over their heads, and bringing them falling among the group. A minute later a solid shot struck directly in their front, causing all except the commander-in-chief to fall back out of sight among the trees; but he, apparently unmoved by the danger, calmly continued observing the enemies' works, and though directly in their view, for some reason they did not fire again.

When Washington finally turned about and rejoined the group, he said to Brereton: "Keep your men, sir, as they are at present disposed, out of sight of the batteries, till evening; then push your pickets forward as close to the town as they can venture, with orders to fall back, unless attacked, only with daylight. Last night the British put outside their lines a number of blacks stricken with the small-pox; you will order your skirmishers, therefore, to fire on them if they endeavour to repeat the attempt, for even the dictates of humanity cannot allow us to jeopardise the health of our army. Hold your regiment in readiness to move out at nightfall in support of the pioneers who will begin breaking ground this evening. Further and specific orders will reach you later through the regular channels."

It was already dark when Brereton, guiding General du Portail and the engineers, once more came out upon the plain. Following after them were a corps of sappers and miners, regiments detailed as pioneers, carrying intrenching tools, regiments armed as usual, to support them if attacked, and carts loaded with bags of sand, empty barrels, fascines, and gabions.

Advancing cautiously, each man keeping touch with the one in front of him, they went forward until within six hundred yards of the British position. Without delay, by means of lanterns which were screened from the foe by being carried in half-barrels, the engineering tapes were laid down, and with pick and shovel the fatigue party went to work, the eagerness of the men being such that, despite of orders, the men from the supporting regiments, leaving their muskets in charge of their fellow-soldiers, would join in the toil. Nor did their colonels reprove them for this; but, on the contrary, Brereton, finding six men from one company engaged in rolling a large rock out of the ditch and to the top of the rapidly waxing pile of earth in its rear, said approvingly: "Well done, boys. I've a wager with the Marquis de Chastellux that an American battery fires the first shot, and I see you intend that I shall win the bet."

"Arrah, 't is in yez pocket aready, colonel," cried one of the sappers. "Sure, how kin a Frinchman expect to bate us whin nary ground-hog nor baver, the aither av thim, is theer in his counthry to tache him how to work wid earth an' timber?"

So well was the night spent that when morning dawned the British found a long line of new earthworks stretched along their front; and though instantly their guns began cannonading them, the men were now protected and could dig on, unheeding of the fire. Indeed, such was the enthusiasm that when at six o'clock the order came for the regiments to fall in, and it was found that they were to be replaced by fresh troops, there was open grumbling. "'T is we did the work," complained a sergeant, "and now them fellows who slept all night will steal the glory."

"Not a bit of it, boys," denied Brereton, as he was passing down the lines preparatory to giving the order of march. "There are still redoubts to be made and the guns are not up yet. 'T will come our turn in the trenches again before they are."

Their commander spoke wittingly, for two days it took to get the trenches, and the redoubts thrown out in advance of them, completed, and the heavy siege-guns were not moved forward until after dark on the 8th. All night long and the

most of the following morning the men toiled, placing them in position, paying no attention to the unceasing thunder of the British guns, unless to stop momentarily and gaze with admiration at the shells, each with its tail of fire, as they curved through the air, or to crack a joke over some one which flew especially near.

"Bark away," laughed one, as he affectionately patted a twenty-four pounder just moved into its position, while shaking his other fist toward Yorktown. "Scold while ye kin, for 't is yer last chance. Like men, we 've sat silent for nine days, an' let ye, like women, do the talkin', but it 's to-morrow mornin' ye 'll find that, if we 've kept still, it 's not been for want of a tongue."

It was noon when Brereton came hurrying into the battery to find the men sleeping among the guns, where they had dropped after their hard labour.

"How is it, Jack?" questioned the officer in command.

"General du Portail has reported the battery completed, and he tells me we 've beat the French by at least two hours."

A wild yell of joy broke from one of the apparently unconscious men, bringing most of the sleepers scrambling to their feet and grasping for their weapons. "I said they could never dig in them clothes!" he cried.

"'T is however to be another 'Gentlemen of the guards, fire first,'" went on Brereton. "General Washington, as a compliment to the French, has decided that their guns shall fire the first shot."

A growl came from the captain of the nearest cannon. "I promised the old gal," he muttered discontentedly, his hand on his thirty-two pounder, "that she should begin it, an' she 's sighted to knock over that twelve pounder that 's been teasin' us, or may I never fire gun agin."

"She 'll do it just as well on the second shot," said Colonel Lamb, "and who cares which fires first, since we 've beat them."

It was three o'clock when Washington and Rochambeau, accompanied by their staffs, came out of the covert-way which permitted entrance and egress to a French redoubt, from the trenches in its rear, and infantry and gunners came to the "present."

"Votre Excellence," said Colonel d'Aboville, saluting, "mes

cannoniers vous implorent de leur donner l'honneur immortel en mettant feu au premier coup de canon."

Washington, realizing that the speech was addressed to him, turned to Rochambeau with a helpless and questioning look.

"Zay desire zat your Excellency does zem ze honneur to fire ze first gun," explained the French general.

Washington removed his hat and bowed. "Try as we will, count," he said, "we cannot equal your nation in politeness." In silence he stepped forward to the gun the colonel indicated, and the captain of the piece handed him the loggerhead with a salute and then fell back respectfully.

Washington touched the red-hot iron to the port fire; there was a puff of smoke, a deafening crash; and the great gun gave a little jump, as if for joy. A thousand pairs of eyes strained after the solid shot as it flew, then as it disappeared over the British earthworks and was heard to go tearing its way through some wall a great shout went up from one end of the lines of the allies, to the other.

Instantly came the roar of the other five cannon, and two ten-inch mortars echoed their thunder by sending ten-inch shells curving high in the air. Ere they descended one of the guns peeping from a British redoubt rose on end and disappeared; raising another cheer. At last the siege was begun.

As if to prove that the foe was nothing daunted, a solid shot, just topping the redoubt, tore through the middle of the group of generals, scattering sand and pebbles over them. Colonel Cobb, who stood nearest Washington, turning impulsively, said, "Sir, you are too much exposed here. Had you not better step back a little?"

"If you are afraid, Colonel Cobb," quietly answered Washington, "you have liberty to step back."

By dark three batteries were firing, and all through the night the guns on both sides rained shot and shell at each other. Two more batteries of thirty-two pounders opened fire on the 10th, and by hot shot set fire that evening to the "Charon" frigate, making a sight of marvellous grandeur, for the ship became one mass of fire from the water's edge to her spittle-heads, all her ports belching flame and each spar

and every rope ablaze at the same moment. The morning of the 11th found fifty-two pieces of artillery mounted and hurling a storm of projectiles into the British lines; and that evening, a second parallel was opened, bringing the guns of the besiegers less than three hundred yards from their earth-works, and putting all parts of the town within range. After this was completed, the defensive fire slackened, for every gun with which the garrison sought to make reply was dismounted the moment it was advanced into the embrasure, compelling their withdrawal during daylight hours; and though each night as soon as dark screened them from the accurate gunnery of the Americans, they were restored and the firing renewed, it was done with a feebleness that bespoke discouragement and exhaustion. For two days shot and shell splintered and tore through abattis and fraising, and levelled parapet and ditch, almost unanswered.

To the right of the new parallel, and almost enfilading it by their fire, were two detached redoubts of the British, well in advance of their main lines. To end their destructive cross fire, as well as to complete the investiture, it was determined to carry them by assault; and as dark settled down on the evening of the 14th, two storming parties, one of French grenadiers and chasseurs, drawn from the brigade of the Baron de Viomenil and under the command of the Comte de Deuxponts, and the second, of American light infantry, taken from the division of the Marquis de Lafayette and commanded by Alexander Hamilton, were moved out of the trenches, and, followed by strong supporting battalions, were advanced as far as was prudent.

It was while the American forlorn hope was standing at ease, awaiting the signal, that Colonel Brereton came hurrying up to where Hamilton and Laurens were whispering final details.

"I could n't keep out of this," he explained; "and the marquis was good enough to say I might serve as a volunteer."

"The more the merrier," responded Laurens. "Come along with me, Jack. We are to take the fort in the rear, and you shall have your stomach full of fighting, I'll warrant you. Here, put this paper in your hat, if you don't want to be stuck by our own men."

where he stood. "Run, Fred! At least, you shall be no prisoner." Jack gave him a last squeeze of the hand and a shove, which sent his friend fairly staggering down into the ditch.

Mobray sprang through a break in the abattis, but had not run ten feet when he turned and shouted back something which the thundering of the artillery prevented Brereton from entirely hearing, but the words he distinguished were sufficient to make him catch at the barrels for support, for they were : —

"Janice Meredith . . . Yorktown . . . point of death . . . small-pox."

For a moment Brereton stood in a kind of daze ; but as the full horror of Mobray's words came home to him, he groaned. Turning, he plunged down into the fortress with a look of a man bereft, and striding to the commander cried, "For God's sake, Hamilton, give me something to do!"

"The very man I wanted," replied the little colonel. "Carry word to the marquis that the redoubt is ours, and that the supports may advance."

Dashing out of the now open sally port, Jack ran at his top speed, and within two minutes delivered the report to General de Lafayette.

"Ah, mes braves," ejaculated the marquis, triumphantly. "My own countreemen they thought they would not it do, and now my boys, they have the fort before Deuxponts has his," he went on, as he pointed into the darkness, out of which could be seen the flash of muskets. "Ah, we will teach the baron a lesson. Colonel Barber," he ordered, turning to his aide, "ride at your best quickness to General Viomenil ; tell him, with my compliments, that our fort, it is ours, and that we can give him the assistance, if he needs it."

The help was not needed, for in five minutes the second outpost was also in the possession of the allies. Working parties were at once thrown forward, and before morning the two captured positions were connected with and made part of the already established parallel.

The fall of these two redoubts in turn opened an enfilading fire on the British, and in desperation, just before dawn on the 15th a sortie was made, and the French were driven out of one



“They scrambled up the parapet and went surging over the crest, pell mell, upon the British.”

of the batteries, and the guns spiked ; but the advantage could not be held against the reserves that came up at the first alarm, and they were in turn forced out at the point of the bayonet.

On the morning of the 16th almost a hundred heavy guns and mortars were in position ; and for twenty-four hours the whole peninsula trembled, as they poured a torrent of destructive, direct, and raking fire, at the closest range, into the weakened defences and crumbling town, with scarcely pretence of resistance from the hemmed in and exhausted British, every shot which especially told being greeted with cheers from the trenches of the allies.

One there was in the uniform of a field officer, who never cheered, yet who, standing in a recklessly exposed position, staringly followed each solid shot as it buried itself in the earthworks, or, passing over them, was heard to strike in the town, and each shell, as it curved upwards and downwards in its great arc. Sometimes the explosion of the latter would throw fragments of what it destroyed in the air, — earth, shingles, bricks, and even human limbs, — raising a cry of triumph from those who served the piece, but he only pressed his lips the more tightly together, as if enduring some torture. Nor could he be persuaded to leave his place for food or sleep, urge who would, but with careworn face and haggard eyes never left it for thirty hours. Occasionally, when for a minute or two there would come an accidental break in the firing, his lips could be seen to move as if he were speaking to himself. Not one knew why he stood there following each shot so anxiously, or little recked that, when there was not one to fasten his attention, he saw instead a pair of dark eyes shadowed by long lashes, delicately pencilled eyebrows, a low forehead surmounted by a wealth of darkest brown hair, a little straight nose, cheeks scarcely ever two minutes the same tint, and lips that, whether they spoke or no, wooed as never words yet did. And as each time the vision flashed out before him, he would half mutter, half sob a prayer : —

“Oh, God, rob her of her beauty if you will, but do not let disease or shot kill her.”

It was he, watching as no other man in all those lines

watched, who suddenly, a little after ten o'clock on the morning of the 17th, shouted : —

“Cease firing !”

Every man within hearing turned to him, and then looked to where his finger pointed.

On the top of a British redoubt stood a red-coated drummer, to the eye beating his instrument, but the sound of it was drowned in the roar of the guns. As the order passed from battery to battery, the thunder gradually ceased, and all that could be heard was the distant rattle of the single drum, sounding “The Parley.” Once the cessation of the firing was complete, an officer, whose uniform and accoutrements flashed out brilliantly as the eastern sun shone on them, mounted the works, and standing beside the drummer slowly waved a white flag.



LXII

WITHIN THE LINES

ONE there was in Yorktown whose suffering was to the eye as great as he who had watched from the outside. A sudden change came over Clowes with the realisation of their danger. He turned white on the confirmation of the arrival of the French fleet; and when the news spread through the town that a deserter had arrived from the American camp with word of Washington's approach, he fell on the street in a fit, out of which he came only when he had been cupped, and sixty ounces of blood taken from him. Not once after that did he seek out Janice, or even come to the custom-house for food or sleep, but pale, and talking much to himself, he wandered restlessly about the town, or still more commonly stood for hours on the highest point of land which opened a view of the bay, gazing anxiously eastward for the promised English fleet.

Janice was too occupied, however, with her mother even to note this exemption. The exposure and fatigue of the long, hot march to Yorktown had proved too great a tax upon Mrs. Meredith's strength, and almost with their arrival she took to her bed and slowly developed a low tidal fever, not dangerous in its character, but unyielding to the doctor's ministrations.

It was on the day that the videttes fell back on the town, bringing word that the allies were advancing, that the girl noticed so marked a change in her mother that she sent for the army surgeon, and that she had done wisely was shown by his gravity after a very cursory examination.

"Miss Meredith," he said, "this nursing is like to be of longer duration than at first seemed probable, and will overtax your strength. 'T is best, therefore, that you let us move

Mrs. Meredith into the army hospital, where she can be properly tended, and you saved from the strain."

"I could not but stay with her, doctor," answered Janice; "but if you think it best for her that she be moved, I can as well attend her there."

The surgeon bit his lip, then told her, "I'll try to secure you permission, if your father think it best." He went downstairs, and finding the squire said: "Mr. Meredith, I have very ill news for you. It has been kept from the army, but there has been for some days an outbreak of small-pox among the negroes, and now your wife is attacked by it."

"Don't say it, man!" implored the squire.

"Tis, alas! but too true. It is necessary that she be at once removed on board the hospital ship, and I shall return as quickly as possible with my assistants and move her. The more promptly you call your daughter from her bedside, the better, for 't will just so much lessen the chance of contagion."

Before the father had well broken the news to Janice, or could persuade her to leave the invalid, the surgeon was returned, and, regardless of the girl's prayers and tears, her mother was placed upon a stretcher, carried to the river-side, and then transferred to the pest-ship, which was anchored in mid-stream. Against his better judgment, but unable to resist his daughter's appeals, the squire sought out Cornwallis with the request that she might be allowed to attend Mrs. Meredith on the ship, but the British general refused.

"Not only would it be contrary to necessary rules, sir, but it would merely expose her needlessly. Fear not that Mrs. Meredith will lack the best of care, for I will give especial directions to the surgeons. My intention was to send a flag, as soon as the enemy approached, with a request that I might pass you all through the lines, out of danger; and this is a sad derangement to the wish, for General Washington would certainly refuse passage to any one sick of this disease, and all must justify him in the refusal. I still think that 't would be best to let me apply for leave for you and Miss Meredith to go out, but —"

"Neither the lass nor I would consider it for a moment, though grateful to your Lordship for the offer."

"Then I will see that you have room in one of the bomb-proofs, but 't will be a time of horror, that I warn you."

He spoke only too truly, and the misery of the next twenty days are impossible to picture. The moment the bombardment began, father and daughter were forced to seek the protection of one of the caves that had been dug in the side of the bluff; and here, in damp, airless, almost dark, and fearfully overcrowded quarters, they were compelled to remain day and night during the siege. Almost from the first, scarcity of wood produced an entire abandonment of cooked food, every one subsisting on raw pork or raw salt beef, or, as Janice chose, eating only ship biscuit and unground coffee berries. Once the fire of the allies began to tell, each hour supplied a fresh tale of wounded, and these were brought into the bomb-proofs for the surgeons to tend, their presence and moans adding to the nightmare; yet but for them it seemed to Janice she would have gone mad in those weeks, for she devoted herself to nursing and feeding them, as an escape from dwelling on her mother's danger and their own helplessness. Even news from the pest-ship had its torture, for when her father twice each day descended the bluff to get the word from the doctor's boat, as it came ashore, she stood in the low doorway of the cave, and at every shot that was heard shrieking through the air, and at every shell which exploded with a crash, she held her breath, full of dread of what it might have done, and in anguish till her father was safe returned with the unvarying and uncheering bulletin the surgeons gave him of Mrs. Meredith's condition.

Yet those in the bomb-proofs escaped the direst of the horrors. Above them were enacted scenes which turned even the stoutest hearts sick with fear and loathing. The least of these was the slaughter of the horses, baggage, cavalry, and artillery, which want of forage rendered necessary, one whole day being made hideous by the screams of the poor beasts, as one by one they were led to a spot where the putrefying of their carcasses would least endanger the health of the soldiery, and their throats cut. All pretence of care of the negroes disappeared with the demand on the officers and soldiers to man the redoubts, and on the surgeons to care for the sick and wounded soldiers, who soon numbered upwards of two

thousand. Naked and half starving, they who had dreamed of freedom were left for the small-pox and putrid fever and for shot and shell to work their will among them. In the abandoned houses and even in the streets, they lay, sick, dismembered, dying, and dead, with not so much as one to aid or bury them.

On the morning of the 17th a fresh number of wounded men were brought into the already overcrowded cave; and though Janice was faint with the long days of anxiety, fright, bad air, poor food, and hard work, she went from man to man, doing what could be done to ease their torments and lessen their groans. The last brought in was in a faint, with the lower part of his face and shoulder horribly torn and shattered by the fragments of a shell, but a little brandy revived him, and he moaned for water. Hurriedly she stooped over him, to drop a little from a spoon between the open lips.

"Janice!" he startled her by crying.

"Who are — ? Oh, Sir Frederick!" she exclaimed. "You! How came you here?"

"They let me out of the prison Clowes me put in," Mobray gasped; "and having nothing better, I enlisted in the ranks under another name." There he choked with blood.

"Doctor," called Janice, "come quickly!"

"Humph!" growled the surgeon, after one glance. "You should not summon me to waste time on him. Can't you see 't is hopeless?"

"Oh, don't —" began Janice.

"Nay, he speaks the truth," said Mobray; "and I thank God 't is so. Don't cry. I am glad to go; and though I have wasted my life, 't is a happier death than poor John André's."

For a moment only the sobs of the girl could be heard, then the dying man gaspingly resumed: "A comrade I once had whom I loved best in this world till I knew you. By a strange chance we loved the same girl; I wish I might die with the knowledge that he is to have the happiness that was denied to me."

"Oh, Sir Frederick, you must not ask it! He —"

"His was so bitter a story that he deserves a love such as yours would be to make it up to him. I can remember him

the merriest of us all, loved by every man in the regiment, from batman to colonel."

"And what changed him?" Janice could not help asking.

"It was one evening at the mess of the Fusileers, when Powel, too deep in drink to know what he was saying, blurted out something concerning Mrs. Loring's relations with Sir William. Poor Charlie was the one man in the force who knew not why such favouritism had been shown in his being put so young into Howe's regiment. But that we were eight to one, he'd have killed Powel then and there. Prevented in that, he set off to slay his colonel, never dreaming he was his own father. He burst in on me late that night, crazed with grief, and told me how he had found him at his mother's, and how she had robbed him of his vengeance by a word. The next day he disappeared, and never news had I of him until that encounter at Greenwood. Does he not deserve something to sweeten his life?"

"I feel for him deeply," replied the girl, sadly, "the more that I did him a grave wrong in my thoughts, and by some words I spoke must have cut him to the quick and added pain to pain."

"Then you will make him happy?"

"No, Sir Frederick, that I cannot."

"Don't punish him for what was not his fault."

"It is not for that," she explained. "Once I loved him, I own. But in a moment of direst need, when I appealed to him, he failed me; and though now I better understand his resentment against my father and myself, I could never bring myself to forgive his cruelty, even were my love not dead."

"I will not believe it of him. Hot and impulsive he is by nature, but never cruel or resentful."

"It is, alas! but too true," grieved Janice.

Once again the baronet choked with blood and struggled for a moment convulsively. Then more faintly he said: "Wilt give him my love and a good-by?"

"I will," sobbed the girl.

Nothing more was said for some time, then Mobray asked faintly: "Is it that I am losing consciousness, or has the firing ceased?"

Janice raised her head with a start. "Why, it has stopped," she exclaimed. "What can it mean?"

"That courage and tenacity have done their all, and now must yield. Poor Cornwallis! I make no doubt he'd gladly change places with me at this instant."

Here Mr. Meredith's voice broke in upon them, as standing in the mouth of the cave he called: "Come, Janice. The firing has ceased, to permit an exchange of flags with the rebels. Up with ye, and get the fresh air while ye can."

"I will stay here, father," replied the girl, "and care for —"

"Nonsense, lass! Ye shall not kill yourself. I order ye to come away."

"Go, Miss Meredith," begged Mobray. "You can do naught for me, and — and — I would have — Do as he says." His hand blindly groped until Janice placed hers within it, when he gave it a weak pressure as he said, "'Tis many a long march and many a sleepless night that the memory of you has sweetened. Thank you, and good-by."

Reluctantly Janice came out of the bomb-proof, blinking and gasping with the novelty of sunlight and sea breeze, after the darkness and stench of the last weeks; and her father, partly supporting, led her up the bluff. It was a strange transformation that greeted her eyes, — ploughed-up streets and ruins of buildings dismantled by shot or left heaps of ashes by the shell, everywhere telling of the fury of the siege.

"Keep your eyes closed, lass," suggested the squire, "for there are sights of horror. In a moment I'll have ye at headquarters, where things have been kept more tidy. There, now ye can look; sit down here and fill your lungs with this good air."

Silently the two seated themselves on the steps of the Nelson house, now pierced in every direction by the shot of the allies, though less damaged than many others. Presently Janice's attention was caught by the sound of shuffling footsteps, as of one with only partial use of his legs, and glancing up she gave a slight cry of fear. And well she might, for there stood the commissary, with his face like one risen from the dead, it was so white and staring.

"Meredith," he whispered, as if his larynx were parched

beyond the ability to speak aloud, while with one hand he held his throat in a vain attempt to make his speech less weak and raucous, "they say 'The Parley' has been beat and a flag sent out, and that the post is to be surrendered. Tell me that Cornwallis will never do that. He's a brave man. Tell me it is n't so."

"Nothing else is there for him to do, Clowes. He's made a splendid defence, but now scarce a gun is left mounted and powder and shot are both exhausted; to persist longer would be useless murder."

"No, no! Let him hold out a few days longer. Clinton will relieve us yet. He must n't give up. God! Meredith, they'll hang me! He must n't surrender. I can't die just as life is worth something. No, no! I can't die now. I'm rich. Ninety thousand pounds I've made. To be caught like a rat! He must n't surrender the post." And muttering to himself, the miserable man shambled away, to repeat the same hopes and expostulations to the next one he found.

"He had another fit last night," remarked the squire; "and no one has seen him eat or sleep in four days, nor can he be persuaded to either, but goes wandering unceasingly about the town, quite unminding of shot and shell. Ho! what's here?" he ended, pointing up the street.

Three officers were coming towards them, arm in arm, the two outsiders in red coats, and the middle one in a blue one, with buff facings. Occasionally as they advanced, he in the blue uniform swerved or stumbled slightly, as if he might be wounded or drunk. But one look at his face was sufficient to show the cause, for across his eyes was tied a broad white band.

"Oh, dad-da," murmured Janice, suddenly paling, "'t is Colonel Brereton they have captured!"

"Nonsense, Jan! 't is impossible to know any man, so covered."

The girl attempted no reassertion, and as the three officers marched up to the headquarters, the two hastily rose from the steps.

"Ha!" exclaimed one of the British officers. "Here stands Miss Meredith now, Colonel Brereton, as if to end your doubting of my assurances of her being alive."

The blindfolded man, with a quick motion, withdrew the hand passed through the arm of his guide and raised it impulsively to the bandage.

"Hold," warningly said the British officer, as he caught the hand. "Small wonder the handkerchief becomes intolerable, with her to look at, but stay on it must till you are within doors."

Jack's hand clutched the officer's arm. "God! man, you are not deceiving me?"

"Speak up, Miss Meredith, and convince the sceptic that General O'Hara, though Irish, is yet a truth-teller on occasion."

"Oh, Colonel Brereton," said Janice, "I have just left Sir Frederick, who is at the point of death, and he gave me a message of farewell to you. Can you not go to him for a moment? 'T would be everything to him."

Jack hesitated. "My mission is so important — General O'Hara, will deliver this letter with a proper explanation to his Lordship, while I see this friend?"

"Certainly. If Miss Meredith will guide you and Lord Chewton to where he lies, I'll see that Lord Cornwallis gets the letter."

In the briefest possible time Brereton stood beside Mobray. Yet when the officer in charge of him untied the handkerchief and stepped back out of hearing, Jack's eyes did not seek his friend, but turned instead to the face of the girl standing beside him. For a moment they lingered in a gaze so steadfast, so devouring, that, try as she would not to look at him, Janice's eyes were drawn to his, despite herself. With a long breath, as if relieved of some dread, Jack finally turned away and knelt beside his friend. "Fred, old comrade," he said, as he took his hand.

"Charlie!" gasped Mobray, weakly, as his eyes opened. "Is 't really you, or am I wandering?"

"'T is I, Fred, come into town with a flag."

"You've beat old Britain, after all, have n't you?"

"No, dear lad," replied Jack, gently. "'T is the old spirit of England that has conquered, as it ever will, when fighting for its rights against those who would rob it of them."



"Across his eyes was tied a broad, white band."

"True. We forgot 't was our own whelps, grown strong, we sought to subjugate. And you had the better man to lead you, Jack."

"Ay, and so we ever shall, so long as Britain makes men generals because they are king's bastards."

"Nay, Charlie, don't let the sore rankle through life. 'T is not from whence you came that counts; 't is what you are. I'd take your shame of birth, if I could rid myself of mine. Fortune, position, and opportunity I've wasted, while you have won rank and glory."

"And now have not one thing to make life worth the while."

"Don't say it, Charlie. There 's something for you to live for still. Put your hand into my shirt — yes — to the left — now you have it."

Brereton drew forth a miniature set with brilliants; and as his eyes lit upon it, he gave an exclamation of surprise.

"'T is the one thing I concealed from my creditors," moaned Sir Frederick, "and now I leave it to you. Watch over and care for her for the sake of your love and of mine, Charlie."

Brereton leaned down and kissed Mobray on the cheek, as he whispered, "I will."

"Is — is Miss Meredith here, Charlie?" asked the dying baronet.

"Yes, Sir Frederick," replied Janice, with a choke.

"I — I — I fear I am a ghastly object," he went on, "but could you bring yourself — Am I too horrible for one kiss of farewell from you? Charlie will not grudge it to me."

The girl knelt beside Brereton, and stooping tenderly kissed the dying man on the same spot that Jack had kissed. Mobray's left hand feebly took hers, and, consciously or unconsciously, brought the one which still held Jack's to it. Holding the two hands within his own so that they touched, he said chokingly: —

"Heaven bless you, and try to forgive him. Good-by both. I have served my term, and at last am released from the bigger jail." A little shudder, a twitch, and he was dead.

For a minute the two remained kneeling, then Brereton said sadly: —

"He was the only friend left me in the world, and I know not why he is taken and I am left." He withdrew his hand from contact with the girl's, and rose. "I cannot stay, for my mission is not to be slighted, but I will speak to O'Hara, and see that he gets a funeral befitting his rank." Brereton squared his shoulders and raised his voice, to say : "Lord Chewton, I am —"

With a quick motion, the girl rose to her feet and said : "I have no right to detain you, Colonel Brereton, but — but I want you to know that neither dad nor I knew the truth concerning Mrs. Loring when we said what we did on that fatal night. We both thought — thought — Your confession to me that once you loved her, and her looking too young to be your mother, led me into a misconception."

"Then you forgive me?" he cried eagerly.

"For the words you spoke then I do not even blame you, sir. But what was, can never be again."

"Ay," said the officer, bitterly. "You need not say it. You cannot scorn me more than I scorn myself."

Not giving her time to reply, he crossed to where the officer with the bandage stood waiting him, and once again was blindfolded, and led to headquarters.

"This way," directed General O'Hara, leading him into a room where stood Cornwallis.

"Are you familiar, sir, with the contents of General Washington's letter?" asked the earl.

"No, my Lord ; I was its bearer only because I begged the Marquis de Lafayette to secure me the service."

"He grants a suspension of hostilities for two hours from the delivery of this, for me to put my proposals in writing. Did he say aught to you, sir, of the terms he would grant?"

"I am no longer on General Washington's staff," answered Brereton, "so I know not his expectations."

"From all I hear of him," said the general, "he is not a man to use a triumph ungenerously. He fought bravely under the British standards, and surely will not now seek to bring unnecessary shame on them." Seating himself at the table, he wrote a few lines, which he folded and sealed. "Will you not, sir, use your influence with him to grant us the customary



Charles, Earl Cornwallis.

honours, and spare the officers from the disgrace of giving up their side arms?"

"I no longer possess influence with or the confidence of his Excellency," replied Brereton, gravely; "but he is a generous man, and I predict will not push his advantage merely for your humiliation."

"Will he not forbear making our surrender a spectacle?"

"If the talk of the camp be of value, my Lord, 'tis said you are to be granted the exact terms you allowed to General Lincoln at Savannah; and you yourself cannot but acknowledge the justice of such treatment."

"'T was not I who dictated the terms of that surrender."

"Your observation, my Lord, forces the reply that 'tis a nation, not an individual, we are fighting."

The proud face of the British general worked for a moment in the intensity of his emotion. "We have no right to complain that we receive measure for measure," he said; "and yet sir, though the *lex talionis* may be justified, it makes it none the less bitter."

Colonel Brereton took the letter, his eyes were blindfolded again, and he was led back beyond the lines.

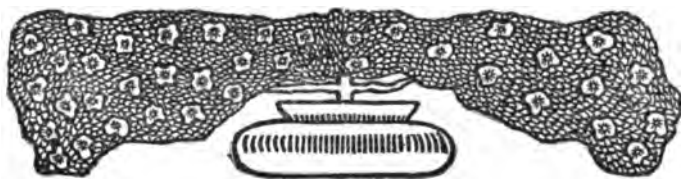
With the expiration of the two hours, the firing was not resumed; and all that day and the next flags were passing and repassing between the lines, with the result that on the afternoon of the latter, commissioners met at the Moore house and drew up the terms of capitulation, which were signed that evening.

At twelve o'clock on the 19th, the English colours were struck on the redoubts, and the American were hoisted in their stead. Two hours later the armies of the allies took up position opposite each other on the level ground outside the town, and the British troops, with shouldered arms, cased colours, and bands playing, as stipulated, an English air, "The World Turned Upside Down," came marching out of their lines. As they advanced, Washington turned to an officer behind him and ordered, "Let the word be passed that the troops are not to cheer. They have fought too well for us to triumph over them." In consequence not a sound came from the American ranks as the British regiments

marched up and with tears in many a brave man's eyes grounded their arms and colours. But the officers, through Washington's generosity, were allowed to retain their swords, sparing Cornwallis the mortification of having to be present in person; and it was General O'Hara who spoke the formal words of surrender, and who led the disarmed and flagless regiments back into the town, once the formalities had been completed. By nightfall twenty-four standards and over eight thousand prisoners were in the possession of the allied forces.

But one had escaped them, for in a cellar, hidden behind a heap of refuse and boxes, his body already stripped of its clothes by pilfering negroes, his face horribly distorted, and with froth yet on his lips, lay the commissary, dead.

And at the very moment the next day that two companies, one of British Fusileers, and one of New Jersey Continentals, were firing a volley over a new-made grave, in which, wrapped in the flag of his country, and buried with every military honor, had been deposited the body of him who had been Sir Frederick Mobray, a fatigue party were rolling into a trench, and carelessly covering with earth from the battered redoubts, along with the bodies of negroes and horses, and of barrels of spoiled pork and beef, the naked corpse of him who had been John Ombrey, Baron Clowes.



LXIII

ON BRUNSWICK GREEN

ON a pleasant June afternoon in the year 1782, the loungers about the Continental Tavern in the village of Brunswick were discussing the recent proclamations of the governor and commander-in-chief forbidding illicit trading with New York, both of which called forth general condemnation, well voiced by Bagby, when he remarked : —

“A man with half an eye can see what they are working for, and that their objections to our supplying the Yorkers is only a blind. What they really wants is that we patriots, who don't spend our days idling about in camp all winter at Rocky-Hill and now at Middle-Brook, doing nothing except eat the people's food, and spend the people's money, but who earn a living by hard work, sha' n't have no market but the continental commissaries, and so will have to take whatever they allow to offer us for our crops.”

“'Taint the proclamations ez duz the rale injoory,” asserted Squire Hennion ; “fer printed orders duz n't hurt nobody, but when the gin'ral sends a hull brigade of sogers ter pervent us sellin' our craps then I consarned ef it aint tyranny ez every freeman is baound ter resist, jest ez we did in '65 an' '74.”

Bagby, with a sour look at Hennion, said : “That 's one of the biggest grievances, but not the way some pretended friends of the people would have us think. What do your fellows say to officers having been fixed, so that pickets are only put where they 'll stop us from sending boats to New York, while there 's one right here is allowed to send cargoes just when he likes?”

“Does yer mean that, Joe?” demanded a farmer.

"That I does," asserted Bagby, looking meaningly at Hennion. "I was told as a chance was given to the army to catch the man deepest in the business — and in worse — red handed. But what's done? Instead of laying a trap, and catching him, they don't stir a finger, but wait ten months and then sends the very officer who did n't do nothing to put a stop to it. For weeks that high cock-a-lorum Brereton's been smelling about this town, and lining the river at night with his pickets, when all the time he could have come here any afternoon, and arrested the traitor."

"Thet 'eres lucky fer yer," snarled Hennion viciously. "yer ain't the only one ez kin tell tales, I warns yer."

"I have n't done no bribing, and it was n't *me* as the information was lodged against," retorted Joe, rancourously.

"You can't mean as General Brereton's winking at the trade, when scarce a boat's got out of the river since his brigade camped there," demanded one of the loungers, indicating with his thumb Brunswick Green, whitened by rows of tents.

"I mean as Brereton could lay hands any time he pleased on one traitor, and why he has n't done so is what I want to know. What's more, I'd like to know, why Washington does n't take any notice of the charges that I've been told was preferred against Brereton nigh six months ago for this very matter. I tell you, fellows, that money's being used, and that some of those who hold themselves highest, is taking it."

"Don't seem like his Excellency 'ud do anythin' ez sneaky ez that," observed the publican, glancing upwards with pride at his signboard, now restored to its former position. "Folks says he's a 'nation fine man."

"I'm just sick of all this getting on the knees to a man," grumbled Joseph, "just because he went and captivated Cornwallis. Washington is n't a bit better than some of us right here and it won't be long before you'll find it out."

"How do you make that, Joe?"

"Is n't he trying to bully Congress into paying the army, just as if he was king, as I suppose he hopes to be some day. You wait till he gets his way, and I guess the tax collectors will make the people sing a different tune about him. If I'm elected to the Assembly this spring, I calculate to make



The Continental Tavern, Brunswick.

some ears buzz and tingle a bit, once the legislature meets. I'll teach some of these swaggering military chaps — who were n't nothing but bond-servants once yet who some of you fellows is fools enough now to talk of sending to Congress — that this is a nation of freemen, and that now that the British is licked, we don't have no more use for them, and — ”

“Waal, I declare, if thet don't favour Squire Meredith, an' his darter,” interjected a farmer, suddenly, pointing with his pipe to where an army waggon was approaching on the Princeton post-road.

“Swan, ef yer ain't right,” cried Hennion. “I did hope we wuz quit of them fer good an' all.”

“Wonder what the gal's in black fer?” observed a loungee.

“My nigger cook Sukey,” said the landlord, “told me that Gin'ral Brereton told her the ole lady wuz mortal sick o' the small-pox an' that when he went aboard the pest-ship, she wuz so weak it did n't seem like she could be moved, but he an' the doctor got her safe ashore, an' when he last hearn, 'bout the first o' the year, she wuz gainin'.”

The publican rose and went forward as the van stopped in front of his door. “Glad tew see yer, squire,” he said, “an' yer, too, Miss Janice. Seems most like ole times. Hope nuthin's wrong with Miss Meredith?”

The squire slowly and heavily got down from the box seat. “We have her body in the waggon,” he said wearily and sadly.

“I vum, but that's too bad!” exclaimed the landlord, and, for want of words of comfort, he hesitatingly held out his hand, but recollecting himself, he was drawing it back, when Mr. Meredith, forgetful of rank, caught and squeezed it.

“She never really rallied,” went on the squire, with tears in his eyes, “and though she lived on through the winter, she did n't have the strength to mend. She died three weeks ago, and we have come back here to bury her.”

“Naow yer an' Miss Janice come right intew my place, an' I'll fix yer both ez comfortable ez I kin,” invited the publican, warmly, once again forgetting himself so far as to pat Mr. Meredith on the back. Then as he helped Janice down, he shouted, “Abram, mix a noggin o' sling, from the bestest, an' tell Sukey that she's wanted right off, no matter what she's doin'.”

The last direction was needless, for the slave, in some way informed of the arrival, had Janice in her arms ere the landlord well completed his speech, and was carrying more than leading her into the hotel and up the stairs to the room reserved for people of quality only, where she lifted her on to the bed and with her arms still clasped about the girl wept over her, half in misery, and half in an almost savage joy, while repeating again and again, "Oh, my missy, my Missy Janice, my young missy, my pooty young missy, come back to ole Sukey."

"Oh, Sukey," sobbed Janice, "but mommy is dead."

"Doan young missy pine," begged the slave. "De Lord he know best, an' he bring my chile, dat I dun take care ob from de day he dun gib her, back to ole black Sukey."

Meantime, the squire, after a question as to where the coffin could be temporarily placed, and a direction to the driver of the wagon, asked the publican: "We had word in Virginia that Greenwood was sold by the state; is 't so?"

"Yes, squire, it wuz auctioned last August an' wuz bought by ole squire Hennion, an' jes naow his Excellency's usin' it fer headquarters, till the army moves north'ard."

A sadder look came on Mr. Meredith's face. "That 's worse news yet," he grieved, with a shake of his head; "but perhaps he 'll not carry his hatred into this." He walked over to where the all-attentive loungers were sitting, and going up to Hennion, said humbly: "We were once friends, Hennion, and I trust that such ill feeling as ye bear for me will not lead ye to refuse a request I have to make."

"An' what 'ere is thet?" inquired Hennion, suspiciously.

"'T was Matilda's — 't was my wife's dying prayer that we should bring her back here, and lay her beside her four babies, and to let her die happy I gave her my word it should be done. Ye 'll not refuse me leave, I'm sure, man, to bury her in the private plot at Greenwood."

"Yer need n't expect ter fool me by no sich a story. I ain't goin' ter let yer weaken my title by no sich a trick!"

"For shame!" cried Joseph, and a number of others echoed his words.

"Yelp away," snarled Hennion, rising; "If 't 't wuz yer

bull ez wuz ter be gored yer'd whine t' other side of yer teeth." With which remark he shuffled away.

Not stopping to listen to the expressions of sympathy and disgust that the idlers began upon, Mr. Meredith entered the public of the tavern.

"Here yer be, squire, jus' mixed from my very bestest liquor, an' it'll set yer right up," declared the landlord, offering him a pewter pot.

The squire made a motion of dissent, but seeing the publican's look of disappointment, he took the cup and drained it. "Ye've not lost your skill, Simon," he remarked kindly, as he returned it. "Canst tell me if 't is possible for me to get a letter into New York quickly?"

"'Taint ez easy ez it wuz afore the soldiers come here fer they pervent the secret trade, but if yer apply tew Gin'ral Brereton, ez lodges with the paason, I calkerlate he kin send it in with a flag if he hez a mind tew."

Mr. Meredith shook his head in discouragement. "It seems as if all I ask must be begged of enemies. However, 't is small grief, after what has passed. Wilt give me pen and ink, man?"

While he was writing, Bagby came into the public, and interrupted him.

"I did n't offer to shake hands, squire," he said, "seeing as you were in trouble, and took up with other things, but I'm glad to see you and Miss Janice back, and there's my hand to prove it."

Mr. Meredith laid down his pen, and took the proffered handshake. "Thank ye, Mr. Bagby," he said, meekly.

"I would n't stop what you're at now," went on Joseph, sitting down at the table, "if I had n't something in my mind as I think 'll interest you big, and may make some things easier that you want."

"What's that?"

"If I put you on to this, I guess you'll be so grateful that I don't need to make no terms beforehand. You'd give me about what I asked, would n't you, if I can get you Greenwood back again?"

"How could ye e'er do that?"

"It's this way. That general act was n't drawn very careful, and when old Hennion bid the place in, I looked it over sharp, and I concluded there was a fighting chance to break the sale. You see, the act declares certain persons traitors, and that their property is forfeited to the state. Now what we must do is to make out that Greenwood was Mrs. Meredith's and that as she was n't named in the act, of course the sale was n't valid and is void."

The squire wagged his head despondingly. "By the colony law it became mine the moment she inherited it."

"You see if I can't make a case of it," urged Bagby. "I've come out a great hand at tying the facts up in such a snarl as no judge or jury can get them straight again, and this time the jury will be with us before we begin. You see old Hennion's been putting the screws on his tenants tight as he can twist them, and glad enough they'd be if they could only have you again, 'stead of him. The whole country's so down on him that I've been planning to prevent his being re-elected to Assembly this spring. Now, you know, as well as I, what I would like, and I guess you won't be so set against it now, for I've got nigh to twenty thousand pounds specie, laid out in all sorts of ventures, so even if we don't get Greenwood, I'll be all the better match, but we won't say nothing about all that till we've seen what comes."

"Nay, Mr. Bagby, I'll not gain your aid by a deceitful silence. I owe ye an apology for the way I treated your overture before, but I must tell you that both my own, and my girl's word is given to Major Hennion, and so —"

"But he's been attainted, an' 'll never be able to come back here."

"Aye, and we too expect to accept exile with him. When we left Williamsburg, we planned once we had buried our dead, to go to New York, where the two will marry, and then I shall follow them to wherever his regiment is ordered."

"But you don't need to go, now that General Brereton's persuaded the governor to pardon you," protested Joseph, "and you —"

"Was it Brereton did that?" demanded Mr. Meredith.

"Between you and me, squire, I'd been at Livingston ever

since you was sent away, and had about won him over, when Brereton got back from Virginia and went to see him."

"I'm glad to hear he's willing to do me a kindness, for not once at Yorktown did he come nigh us, and so I feared me he would refuse a favour I must shortly ask of him."

"What's that?"

"I'm writing to Phil Hennion, begging him to intercede with his father and get me permission to bury my wife at Greenwood."

"You would n't need to do no asking if you'd only let me get the property back."

"You're right, man, and if it does nothing more, we'll perhaps frighten him into yielding us that much."

"'T will take time, you understand, squire, and it can't be done if you go to York or out of the country."

"We'll stay here as long as there's nothing better to do."

"That's the talk. And don't you wherit about your lodgings, if you're short of cash. I'll fix it with Si, and chance my getting paid somehow. I'll see him right off, and fix it so you and Miss Janice has the best there is." He started to go; then asked, "I hope — there is n't any danger — I suppose — she'll keep, eh, squire?"

The husband winced. "Yes," he replied huskily. "The Marquis de Lafayette, quite unasked, ordered the commissaries to give us all we needed of a pipe of rum."

"That was mighty generous," said Bagby, "for I suppose he had to pay for it. Even a major-general, I take it, can't draw no such a quantity gratis."

"I writ him, asking that I might know the cost, but he answered that 't was nothing. 'T is impossible to say what we owe to him. 'T was he, so Doctor Craik told me, who asked him to bring Mrs. Meredith off the pest-ship, and 't was he who furnished us with the army-van in which we've journeyed from Virginia. Had we been kinsmen, he could not have been kinder."

"Now that only shows how a man tries to take credit for what he has n't had a finger in. Brereton, who, since he was made a general and got so thick with the governor, has put on airs enough to kill a cat, told your Sukey, as now is cook

here, that 't was he went aboard the pest-ship with the doctor, and brought her off."

"'T is the first I've heard of it," averred Mr. Meredith, incredulously yet thoughtfully.

"I tell you that Brereton is a sly, sneaky fellow, as needs watching in more than one matter. Nigh ten months ago I showed him how he could nab old Hennion, so that like as not he'd have gone to the gallows, but he did n't stir a finger, durn him! Oh, here's Si, now. Say, I want you to treat Mr. Meredith and Miss Janice real handsome, and don't trouble them with no bills, but leave me to square it," he said to the landlord, who had come bustling in.

"Lor, Joe, yer duz n't think I wuz goin' tew make no charge fer this? Why, the squire lent me the money ez started me, an' I calkerlate he kin stay on here jus' about ez long ez he elects tew." Then the publican laughed. "Like ez not there won't be no supper tew-night, squire. That 'ere Sukey hez got yer gal tucked in my best tester bed, an' is croonin' her tew sleep jes' like she wuz a baby ag'in. She most bit my head off when I went in tew tell her supper-time wuz comin'. 'Stonishin' haow like white folks niggers kin feel sometimes, ain't it?"

"I bought her when our first baby was coming, and she saw four born and buried, and nigh broke her heart over each one in turn," said the squire, huskily; "so when Janice came, 't was as if she was her own child." He rose, his letter completed, and with a word to explain his movements, walked across the green to the parsonage, where his knock brought Peg to the door, and resulted in a series of wild greetings and exclamations. At last, however, the old-time master was permitted to make known the object of his call, and was ushered into a room where Brereton was sitting writing.

"Mr. Meredith!" exclaimed Jack, starting to his feet. "How are you all — that — how is Miss Meredith?"

"She's stood the grief and — I know not if ye have heard of Mrs. Meredith's death?"

"Yes; a friend in Virginia wrote me."

"She's borne up under that and under the hard journey wonderfully, and has been braver and more cheerful, I fear,

than I myself. I've come to ye, General Brereton, to ask if ye could send a letter for me, under flag, to New York?"

"Certainly, if 't is of a character that makes it allowable."

"I've not sealed it, that you might read it," answered the squire, holding out his letter.

Brereton read it slowly, as if he was thinking between the words. "It shall be sent in at once," he promised, his lips set as if to conceal some emotion. Then he asked, "You write to Colonel Hennion as if — are he and — you intend to give Miss Meredith to him?"

"Yes."

Jack wheeled and looked out of a window for an instant; without turning he said, "Is she — does she — she is willing?"

"Ay, the lass has at last found she loves him, and is as ready now as I ever was."

Again Brereton was silent for a breathing space. "When will they wed?" he questioned finally.

"Once we can get to York."

"And that will be?"

"The burial of Mrs. Meredith and other matters will keep us in Brunswick for an uncertain length of time."

"And you will lodge where?"

"At the tavern."

"'T is no place for Miss Meredith."

"Beggars cannot be choosers, sir."

For a moment Brereton said nothing; then remarked as he faced about, "If I can serve you in any other way, Mr. Meredith, hesitate to ask nothing of me."

"My thanks to ye, general," answered Mr. Meredith, gratefully. "I fear me I little merit courtesies at your hands."

"'T is a peace-making time," replied Jack, "and we'll put the ill feeling away, as 't is to be hoped Great Britain and our country will do, once the treaty is negotiated and ratified."

"'T is no country I have," rejoined the squire, sadly. "One word, sir, and I will be gone. I was but just told that 't was ye who got Mrs. Meredith off the pest-ship; and if —"

Brereton held up his hand. "'T was the Marquis who gave

the order, Mr. Meredith, and the Surgeon-General who superintended the removal."

"So I was told at the time, but I feared that I might have been misinformed. None the less, general, I am your present debtor;" with which words the squire bowed himself out.

Left alone, Brereton stood like a stone for some minutes ere he resumed his seat. He glanced down at the sheet, on which was written:—

BRUNSWICK, June 13th, 1782.

"SIR, —After three months' test, I can assure your Excellency that it is possible to very materially if not entirely check the illicit trade with New York, but only by the constant employment of a considerable force of men in a service at once fatiguing to them and irritating to the neighbourhood. I would therefore suggest, in place of these purely repressive measures, that others which will at once bring to justice those most deeply concerned in the trade, and terrify by example those who are only occasionally guilty, be employed, and therefore beg to submit for your consideration the following plan of action.

Shoving the paper to one side, Brereton took a fresh sheet, and wrote a hurried letter, which, when sealed, he addressed to "Lady Washington, Headquarters at Greenwood Manor." This done, he finished his official letter, and going to the rows of tents on the green, he delivered the two into the hands of an officer, with an order to ride with them at once.

On the following day a coach drew up in front of the Continental Tavern, and with much dignity a negro in livery alighted from the seat beside the driver.

"You will deliver Lady Washington's an' my deferential complimen's to Miss Janice Meredith; likewise dis letter from his Excellency," he said grandly to the tavern-keeper.

"Waal, of all airs fer a nigger!" snorted mine host. "Duz his Excellency run yer jobs fer yer ter hum? Guess yer ain't so fat, be yer, that yer keant carry that inter the settin'-room yerself."

With a glance of outraged dignity that should have annihilated the publican, the man went across the hall, and after a knock, entered.

"Why, Billy!" exclaimed Janice, starting up from her chair, her arm outstretched.

The intense dignity melted away in a breath, and the darky chuckled and slapped himself with delight as he took the hand. "Der, now!" he cried, "I dun assure her Ladyship dat Missy would remember Billy. Here am a letter from his Excellency, Miss."

Opening it, Janice read it out to her father: —

HEADQUARTERS, 14 June, 1782.

DEAR MISS JANICE, — *In writing this I but act as Mrs. Washington's scribe, she having an invincible dislike to the use of a pen. She hopes and begs that you will favour us with the honour of your company for a time at Headquarters, and to this I would add my own persuasions were I not sure that hers will count above mine. However, let me say that it will be a personal gratification to me if you give us now the pleasure I have several times counted upon in the past. Thinking to make more certain of your granting this request, and that you may make the journey without discomfort, Mrs. Washington sends her coach.*

I most sincerely regretted not seeing you at Yorktown, the more that Lord Cornwallis assured me when he dined with me on the evening after the surrender, that he would secure your presence at the banquet he tendered to the French and American officers; but I was still more grieved when told the reason for your refusal to grace the occasion by your presence. The sudden sickness of poor Mr. Custis, which compelled me to hasten away from York, and the affecting circumstance of his untimely death threw Mrs. Washington and Mrs. Bassett, who were both present, into such deep distress that I could not find it in my heart to leave Eltham, once the funeral rites were performed. The Marquis has since assured me that nothing was neglected which could be of comfort or service to your mother, and I trust that he speaks informedly. I have just learned of your loss, and hasten to tender you both Mrs. Washington's and my own sympathy on this melancholy occasion.

Be assured that your company will truly gratify both me and the partner of all my Domestic enjoyments, and that I am, my dear young lady, with every sentiment of respect and esteem,
Yr most obed^t. h^{um} serv^t

G^d WASHINGTON.

"'Tis the very thing I'd have for ye, Jan," exclaimed the squire.

"Oh, dad-da, I'll not leave you."

"That ye shall, for I'll be busy with this scheme of Bagby's, and the tavern is no place for ye, child, let alone what ye'll be forever dwelling on if ye have no distraction."

"An' his Excellency," said the messenger, "done tell me to say dat he done holds you' parole ob honour, an' dat, if you doan' come back with me in de coach, he done send de provost gyard to fotch youse under arrest. What's mo, Miss, dat big villin, Blueskin, will be powerful joyed to see youse again."



LXIV

A SETTLING OF OLD SCORES

ON a night of the most intense darkness a strange-looking craft was stealing slowly up the Raritan, quite as much helped in its progress by the flood-tide as by the silent stroke of the oars, about which were wound cloths where they rubbed against the thole-pins. The rowers knelt on the bottom of the boat, so that nothing but their heads projected above the gunwale, which set low in the water, and to which were tied branches of trees, concealing it so completely that at ten feet distance on any ordinarily clear night it would have been difficult to know that it was not a drifting limb.

Lying at full length in the bottom of the boat were two men, one of whom from time to time moved impatiently.

"Will we never get there?" he finally whispered.

"Slow work it is," replied the other, in the lowest of voices, "but it has to be done careful."

"I understood you the river was open once more."

"Ay. We had word the regiments had been withdrawn, to go north with the main army; but this is only the second night the boats have ventured in, and cautious we've always had to be."

The note of a crow came floating over the water, and at the sound the last speaker raised himself on his elbow and deliberately began counting in a low voice. As he spoke the number "ten," once again came the discordant "caw, caw," and instantly the counter opened his mouth and sent forth an admirable imitation of the cry of a screech-owl. Counting once again to ten, he repeated the shriek, then listened.

In a moment the first splash of oars reached them.

"This way," softly called the man, and put out his hand to prevent a small boat colliding with the larger one.

"Thought I heard a bird just now," remarked the solitary occupant.

"If you did, 't was a king bird."

"I have n't much to-night," announced the new arrival, as he handed a small packet into the boat. "It contains a paper from No. 2, giving the decisions of the last council of war, and the line of march they have adopted for next week."

The one in the larger boat pulled up a cleverly fitted board in the bottom of the boat, and taking out a letter, slipped the just received parcel into the cavity and dropped the plank back into place. "There 's a letter for you," he said, passing it to the new-comer. Without another word the stranger shoved off, and in a moment was lost in the darkness.

"Was n't that Joe Bagby?" questioned the man's companion.

"'Sh! We don't mention no names, if it can be avoided."

"You need not fear me. I am in the general's confidence, and know as well as you that No. 2 is Major-General Parsons of the Connecticut line."

"That 's more than I knew," muttered the boatman; "so you see, Colonel Hennion, 't is as well not to mention names."

In silence the boat drifted onward, save for an order presently given that the rowers turn in toward the left bank.

"Seems like I hearn suthin'," suddenly came a voice out of the darkness.

"'T is only we, fishin' for what 's to be caught!" said the boatman.

"No danger of yer catchin' nuthin' here," asserted the unseen speaker.

"Pull into the pier, boys! We're got your son aboard, Hennion."

A low exclamation came from the man standing on the rude wharf that suddenly loomed into view. "Yer duz n't mean my Phil!"

"Ay, dad," answered the colonel, as he rose and climbed out of the boat; "'t is me."

"Lordy me, if I ever expected ter see yer ag'in, Phil," cried the father, as he threw his arms about him. "This is a sur-

prise ez duz my ole bones a heap of good. Naow say yer 've come ter tell me thet I may make yer peace with the state, an' yer'll come back ter Boxely fer good. Terrible lonesome I 've bin, lad, all these years yer 've bin off."

"Nay, dad, my heart's too much in the service to ever let me get interested in turnips or cabbages again. What I've come for is to make you yield to Mr. Meredith's request, and if possible to get a word with Janice. Tell me he's mistaken, dad, in what he wrote. You never refused —"

"Look here, Hennion," growled the boatman, "we can't waste all night while you —"

He was in turn interrupted by a sharp click, the spit of a port fire sounded, and instantly came a glare of red light, which brought those on the pier into full view, and showed to them two boats full of soldiers on the river, and another party of them rising from behind a fence a few rods away.

With a scream of terror, Squire Hennion started down the wharf, hoping to escape before the troops closed in.

"Halt!" commanded some one; and when the old man still ran, he ordered "Fire."

"Bang!" went a musket on the word; but Hennion reached the end of the pier, and turned down the river bank. "Bang, bang," went two more; and the runner staggered, then pitched forward on his face.

"I surrender," announced Philemon, as the soldiers came crowding on to the wharf. "Where is your commander?"

"I am sorry to see you here, Hennion," said Brereton's voice. "You are the last man I wanted to take prisoner under such circumstances."

"Wilt let me go to my father?" steadily requested the British colonel. "I give my word not to escape."

"Let him go free," ordered Brereton; and together they walked down to the prostrate body, which an officer had already turned on its face, so that he might search the pockets.

As the two came up, the squire opened his eyes. "They've dun fer me, Phil," he moaned. "Yer ole dad's gone ter the well once too often, an' a durn fool he wuz ter go on, when he know'd they wuz arter them ez wuz consarned in it."

As he spoke, the keel of one of the boats which had rowed in, grated on the river bottom. An officer, springing ashore, joined the group, and saluting, reported: "General Brereton, when you fired the light, it revealed, close upon us, a small boat stealing up the river, in which we captured Mr. Bagby. He declares he was out fishing; but he had no tackle, and the bowsman swears that as we approached he saw him put something into his mouth and swallow it."

"Bring him here," ordered the commander; and Bagby, his hands and feet tied, was more speedily than politely spilled into the shallow water and dragged ashore.

"I'll pay you military fellows up!" he sputtered angrily. "Attacking and abusing citizens as is engaged in lawful occupations. You wait till the Assembly meets. Hello! Well, I'm durned, what's happened to Squire Hennion?" he ejaculated. "You don't mean to say he's got his deserts at last? Now, I guess you see what your buying of Greenwood's brought you. No man makes an enemy of Joe Bagby but lives to regret it."

A look of intense malignity came on the dying man's face, and pushing his son, who was kneeling beside him, away, he raised himself with an effort on one elbow. "So it wuz yer ez betrayed me, wuz it," he cried, "yer ez took yer share in it daown ter the time ez we split over Greenwood, an' naow goes an' plays the sneak? Duz yer hearn that, Phil? Ef yer care fer me one bit, boy, bide yer chance an' pay him aout fer what he's done ter —" He beat the air wildly with his free arm, in a vain attempt to steady himself, and then once more pitched forward on his face, the blood pouring from his mouth.

The sun had been up an hour when three companies of Continentals, guarding five prisoners, marched into Brunswick, and at the word of command halted on the green. The sight was enough to draw most of the villagers to doors or windows; but when the rumour spread like wild-fire that among those prisoners were Joseph Bagby and Philemon Hennion, every inhabitant who could, promptly collected about the troops, where, as the soldiers and officers paid no attention to their questions, they spent their time in surmises as to what

it meant, and in listening to the Honourable Joseph's threats and fulminations against the military power.

Among those who thus gathered was Mr. Meredith; and the moment he appeared Colonel Hennion called to Brereton, who was busily engaged in conferring with the officer in actual command of the half battalion.

"General Brereton," he requested, "may I have a few words in private with Squire Meredith?"

"Withdraw your guards out of ear-shot, Captain Blaisdell," ordered Brereton.

"Why, Phil, this is a sad plight to find ye in," said the squire, regretfully, as he held out his hand, forgetful that the prisoner's cords prevented his taking it.

"'T is worse than you think, squire," answered Philemon, calmly; "I came but to see my father about your wish, but, caught as I was, they will never believe it, and will doubtless hang me as a spy the moment a court-martial has sat."

"Nay, lad, 't is not possible they —"

"'T is what we should do in the same circumstances, so 't is not for me to complain. 'T was not this, however, of which I desired to speak. My father was killed this morning, and his death makes it possible for me to end your difficulties. We had word in New York that the governor had pardoned you; is 't so?"

"Ay."

"Then 't is all right, if we but act quick enough to complete it, ere I am sent to the gallows. Find a justice of the peace without delay, and let him draw deeds from me to — to Janice, of both Greenwood and Boxely, and bring them to me to sign —"

"Surely, Phil, 't is —" protestingly began the squire.

"Waste not a moment," importuned Philemon. "If 't is delayed till I am convicted, the state may claim that they were in escheat, but for these few hours I have a good title, and if ever they seek to invalidate the deeds, set up the mortgages on Boxely that you hold, as the consideration."

"But —"

"In God's name, squire, don't lose the opportunity by delay! 'T is best, whatever comes; for even if by the most

marvellous luck I can convince the court that I am no spy, and so go free, the moment the legislature meets, they will vote a bill of forfeiture against me; so 't is the one means to save the property, whatever comes."

"Ye have the sense of it, lad," acceded Mr. Meredith, "and I'll do as ye tell me, this instant. But I'll do all that's possible to save ye as well, and if ye but go free, ye shall be not a penny the worse off, that I swear to ye."

"And if not, 't is what I would do with the lands, were I dying a natural death, squire."

"Don't lose hope, lad," said the squire, his hand on Phil's shoulder. "Once the parson has drawn the deeds, I'll see Washington himself, and we'll save ye yet." Then he hurried away towards the parsonage.

During this dialogue other occurrences had been taking place, which very much interested yet mystified the crowd of spectators. When the conference between the general and major had ended, Brereton walked to the doctor's house and entered it. The major meantime went over to the constable, and in response to something he said, the town official took out his keys, and unlocked the stocks, a proceeding which set both soldiers and townfolk whispering curiously.

"Free the prisoner Bagby's hands and feet, Corporal Cox, and set him in," commanded the major.

"What in the 'nation is comin'!" marvelled one of the observers. "Of all rum ways o' treatin' a suspect, this 'ere is the rummiest."

Another pause followed, save for a new outburst from Joe, concerning the kinds of vengeance he intended to shortly inaugurate; but presently Brereton and the doctor came across the green, the latter carrying a bottle and spoon in his hand.

"This is the one," said the general; and then, as the doctor stepped forward and poured the spoon full from the bottle, he ordered, "Open your mouth, Mr. Bagby."

"This is tyranny," shrieked Joe, "and I won't do no such thing." He shut his mouth with a snap and set his jaws rigidly.

"Hold his head," commanded Brereton; and the corporal

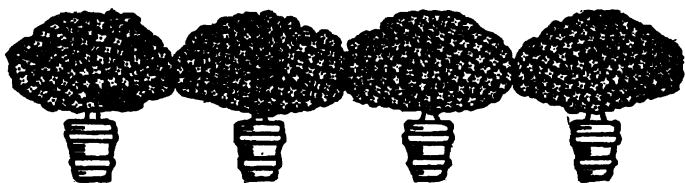
took it firmly and bent it back so that the helpless man looked skyward. "Snuff," said Jack, and a second officer, pulling out a small box, stepped forward, and placed a pinch in Bagby's nose.

"A-chew!" went Joe, and as his mouth flew open, the officer inserted the barrel of his pistol, so that when he tried to close his jaws again they only bit on steel. Instantly the spoon was put to his lips, and the contents emptied down his throat.

"How long will it take?" the general asked.

"The lobelia ought to act in about five minutes," replied the doctor.

Silence ensued, as soldiers and crowd stared at the immovable Joseph, whose complexion slowly turned from ruddy to white, and from white to greenish yellow, while into his eyes and mouth came a hang-dog look of woebegone misery and sickness.



LXV

PEACE IN SIGHT

THE occupants of Greenwood were still at breakfast that same morning, when word was brought to the commander-in-chief that Mr. Meredith desired speech with him.

"Set another place, Billy, and bid him to come in," ordered the hostess.

"I'll tell him, Lady Washington," cried Janice, springing up, and after she had nearly throttled her father on the porch, he was led in.

"My thanks to ye, Lady Washington," said the squire, once the introduction was made, "but I have broken fast already, and have merely come to intercede with his Excellency on a sad matter." In the fewest possible words he explained Philemon's situation. "The lad assures me that he came but to serve me, and with never a thought of spying," he ended. "I trust therefore that ye'll not hold him as one, however suspiciously it may appear."

"The matter shall have careful consideration at my hands, Mr. Meredith," replied Washington.

"All the more, I trust, that ye are good enough to take an interest in my Jan, who is his promised bride."

Both Washington and his wife turned to the girl, and the former said, —

"What, Miss Janice, is this the way thou hast kept thy promise to me to save thy smiles and blushes for some good Whig?"

"Janice Meredith! you are the most ungrateful creature that ever I knew!" asserted Mrs. Washington, crossly.

The girl only looked down into her lap, without an attempt at reply, but her father took up the cudgels.



Greenwood, the home of the Merediths.

"Nay!" he denied, "many a favor we owe to Mr. Hennion, and now he has topped them all by signing deeds within the hour that gives to the girl both Greenwood and Boxely."

Janice looked up at her father. "'Tis like him," she said, chokingly. "Oh, General Washington, will you not be merciful to him?"

"What is done must depend wholly on General Brereton's report, Miss Janice," answered Washington, gravely.

"Oh, not on him!" besought the girl. "He has reason to dislike Major Hennion, and he is capable of such bitter resentments."

"Hush, child, have you no eyes?" cried Mrs. Washington, and Janice faced about to find Brereton standing behind her.

Not a feature of Jack's face showed that he had heard her, as he saluted and began, —

"The manoeuvre was executed last night, your Excellency, and I have the honour to hand you my report."

Washington took the document and began an instant reading of it, while the new arrival turned to give and receive a warm greeting with the hostess. "You'll eat some breakfast, Jack," she almost begged, with affectionate hospitality.

"Thank you, Lady Washington, I — I — some other morning," answered the officer.

An awkward silence fell, yet which no one attempted to break, as the commander-in-chief slowly conned each page of the report. Once finished, he turned to the squire, and said, "I must ask, Mr. Meredith, that you go into the parlour, where later I will see you. I have certain questions to put to General Brereton." Mr. Meredith gone, he asked, —

"What was the paper you recovered from this Bagby?"

"'Twas a slip of tissue silk, which proves beyond doubt that he has been supplying the British with information, though unluckily there is nothing to show from whom in our army he received his information."

"'Tis unfortunate, for we have long known that a leak existed in our very councils. However, 'tis something gained to have broken the channel of communication, and to have brought one traitor to the gallows. You will deliver the prisoners into

the hands of the provost-marshal, sir, and be at headquarters at two this afternoon, prepared to give your testimony and papers to the court I shall order."

Brereton saluted, and made a movement of departure, but Washington spoke again, —

"In this report, sir, you speak of having taken Lieutenant Colonel Hennion a prisoner of war. Under the circumstances in which he was captured 't is a strange definition to give to his footing."

Jack's bronzed face reddened slightly. "I so stated it, your Excellency, because I overheard the colonel tell his father that he had but stolen within our lines to do Mr. Meredith a service, and having myself read the letter that induced him to take the risk, I had every reason to believe that he spoke nothing but the truth. Yet I knew that no court-martial would take such a view, and so gave him that quality in my report, to save him from a fate he does not merit."

"Once, sir, you were guilty of a deceit," said Washington, sternly, "and the present conditions are enough similar to make me suspicious. Are you certain that the fact that Miss Meredith's happiness is concerned in this officer's fate, has had nothing to do with the quality you have given to his status?"

Despite the tan, General Brereton's cheeks paled. "My God, your Excellency!" he burst out. "It has been one long struggle from the moment I found him my prisoner, until my report was safe in your hands not to — not to send him to the gallows, as I could by mere silence so easily have done. That I reported so promptly was due to the fact that I dared not delay, lest the temptation should become too strong."

Washington's eye had never left Brereton during his outbreak, and at the end he said: "You will remain at headquarters, and report to me again, sir, in half an hour, after I have duly considered the facts."

Making no reply, Jack saluted, and passed out of the room. As he reached the doorway, Janice, who had risen, said:

"I pray you, General Brereton, to forgive me the grave wrong I have just done you in both thought and speech."

Silently Jack bowed, and closed the door.

"I should think thee 'd be well ashamed of thyself, miss," declared Mrs. Washington, fretfully.

"I am, Lady Washington," replied the girl, humbly, "but believe me, that wrong as I was in this instance, I am not so wholly to blame as I seem, for one example of General Brereton's temper which he gave me, proves that he can carry his resentment to all lengths, and —"

"And is it because the man has a temper that you have slighted his suit?" interrupted the matron, peevishly. "Child, child, don't you know that every man that is worth his salt has a warm constitution? Why, the tales and warnings that were brought to me of the general's cholerick nature when he was wooing me were enough to fright any woman. And true they were, for once roused, his wrath is terrible. Yet to me he has ever been the kindest and most amiable of husbands."

Washington smiled, as he said, "Miss Janice will know who deserves the credit for that. But my wife is right. A man is not apt to vent his wrath on the woman he loves, unless she gives him extreme cause."

"Bitter cause we gave to General Brereton, I own, but — but I can never think that had he truly loved me he would have refused his aid in our extremity."

"Refused thee aid!" snapped Jack's partisan. "Has he done anything but help thee in every way he could? Who was it brought thy poor mother off that dreadful ship? Who was it has teased General Lafayette with such unending favours for thee, that the marquis asked me what was the source of General Brereton's interest in one Mr. Meredith? Who only last week wrote me a letter that would have melted a stone — anything, I believe, but thy heart — begging me to offer thee a home, that thou might'st escape the tavern discomfort and crowd? I declare, thy ingratitude nigh makes me regret my having wasted any liking upon thee."

"Oh, Lady Washington," cried Janice, "not a one of these did I know of, and if you but knew what gladness it brings me to learn that, once he knew we had insulted him unwittingly, he forgave us, and put his resentment away."

"Then you 'll reward him as he deserves?" delightedly exclaimed the match-maker.

"I am promised, Lady Washington," replied the girl, gravely, "and were I not, I could never forget his once cruelty —"

"What did he?"

"I cannot bear to tell, now he has, by his kindness, endeavoured to atone for it."

"I make no doubt 't is more of his masked generosity. Never will I believe that loving you as I know he does, he could be hard-hearted or cruel to you."

"'T was not — 't was worse than if his anger had fallen on me, Lady Washington. He refused to aid my father, and but for his Excellency's untellable generosity and —"

Washington, who had been rereading the report, looked up, and interrupted: "Did General Brereton tell you that it was my act, Miss Janice?"

"No, your Excellency, 't was from Governor Livingston that we learned of the debt we owed to you, for which no thanks can ever —"

Once again Washington interrupted. "There are no thanks due to me, Miss Janice," he said, "for, much as I may have wished to service you, my public duties made it unwise. Your gratitude is wholly due to Brereton."

"I do not understand — What do you mean?" exclaimed the girl. "He — 't was your letter, so the governor said —"

"'T was my letter, but his act," replied Washington; and in a few words explained. "General Brereton expected, and should have been court-martialled and shot for what he did," he ended; "but he had served me faithfully, and so I refrained from making his misconduct public, and punished him no further than by demanding his resignation from my staff. You lost me a good friend and servant, Miss Janice, but now, with the war in effect ended, I scarce feel regret that his action, however blamable, spared you the loss of your father."

"Now, what do you say, miss?" inquired Mrs. Washington, triumphantly.

All the reply Janice made was to let her head fall forward on the table, as she burst into tears.

"There, there, my child!" cried the matron, putting her arms about and raising the girl, so that the down bent head

might find a resting-place on her bosom. "I did not mean to pain thee."

"Oh, Lady Washington," sobbed Janice, as she threw her arms about the dame's neck, "I — I am so miserable, an — an — and so happy!"

Ten minutes later, Janice, with pale cheeks, but determined air, sought her father in the parlour, and going on her knees at his feet, said, —

"I have that to tell, dad-da, which I fear will anger and pain you greatly." Then in a few words she repeated to him what Washington had told her.

"And why should that hurt me, lass? I own I treated the general somewhat scurvily, and that he has repaid it in different kind, but 't will be no grief to apologise and thank him for what he did."

"'T was not that of which I am apprehensive, but when I wrote to General Brereton, and besought his aid, I promised that I would wed him if he would but save you, and — and, oh, dad-da, please be not angry with me, but I — I feel I must fulfil my pledge, if he asks it of me."

"And how of your promise — and mine — to Phil?"

"I came to you, ere seeking to see him, to explain —"

The squire shook his head doubtingly. "I can't lay blame on ye, Jan, since I owe my very life to what ye did. Yet 't is bitter to me to break faith with Philemon."

"I feel as guilty, dad-da, but I think he will be generous, and give us back our promise, when I tell him all the facts."

"And 't is nigh as hard," went on the father, "to think of letting ye wed General Brereton, though I do owe my life to him."

"Ah, dad-da, you will not punish him for the wrong his parents did him?"

"'T is not that, Jan, but because he is a rebel to —"

The girl gave a little laugh, as if a weight were taken from her thoughts, and she flung her arms about her father's neck and kissed him. "Why, dad-da," she cried, with the old roguishness, "how can he be a rebel, now that they've won?"

The squire pulled a wry look. "Little I dreamed I'd

ever break faith, or make friends of the enemies of my king, but the times are disloyal, and I suppose one must go with them. If ye can persuade Phil to release us, Jan, have your way."

Again his daughter kissed him, but this time tenderly, with all the archness gone. "Thank you, dad, for yielding," she said, "for 't would have been horrible to me had you not."

The squire kissed her in return. "Better one rebel in the family than two," he responded with a laugh, which suggested that whatever his compunctions, he knew at heart that the outcome was for the best, and was already reconciled to it. "Thou 'rt too good a lass, Jan, to make into more of a rebel than this same Brereton will no doubt make thee."

"He 'll make no rebel of me to my darling dad, that I promise," asserted Janice, joyfully.

Mr. Meredith laughed still more heartily. "I 'll rest content if ye don't declare independence of your old dad, and allegiance to him, within one month of marriage, Jan."

As he ended, came a knock on the door and an officer entered. "His Excellency directs me to say, Miss Meredith," he announced, "that the provost-marshal has orders to bring Colonel Hennion to you, whenever you are ready to see him."

"I 'll see him now," replied the girl.

"Poor lad!" lamented the squire.

"Oh, dad, what can I say to him?" grieved Janice.

"I know not, lass," replied the father, as he hastened to leave the room.

It was a hard interview the girl had with Colonel Hennion, but she went through with it bravely, telling all the circumstances. "'T is not merely that I owe him the fulfilment of the promise I made him before that to you was given, Phil," Janice ended, "but though I thought my love for him was dead, the moment I heard of how he had risked life and station to spare me grief, I—I—" There she ceased speaking, but her eyes and cheeks told eloquently what her tongue refused to put in words.

Philemon, with a sad face, took her hand. "I 'll not make it the harder for you by protests or appeals, Janice," he said, "for, however it may pain me, I wish to spare you."

"Oh, don't, please," she sobbed. "If you — if you would only blame me."

"I can't do that," he replied simply. "And — and 't is as well, perhaps. General Washington just sent me word that I am only to be treated as a prisoner of war, but even when I am exchanged I must henceforth be an exile, with only my sword to depend upon; so it would have been no life for you."

"Oh, Phil, you'll take back Greenwood and Boxely, won't —"

"Only to have them taken by the state? Keep them, as I would have you, Janice, and if ever I am invalided, and the laws will let me, I'll come back and ask you for Boxely, provided I can bear the thought of — of — of a life of rust. Till then God prosper you and good-by."

For some time after Philemon left the room the girl wept, but by degrees the sobs ended, and she became calmer. Yet, as the tears ceased, some other emotion replaced them, for thrice, as she sat musing, her cheeks flushed without apparent reason, several times her brows wrinkled, as if some question were puzzling her; and once she started forward impulsively, some action determined, only to sink back, as if lacking courage. Suddenly she sprang to her feet, and, apparently afraid to give herself time for consideration, she ran, rather than walked, into the garden. Here she picked a single blossom from a rose bush, and such sprays of honeysuckle as she could find, and made them into a bunch. Kissing the flowers as if they were the dearest thing in the world, she hurried out of the garden, and glanced about. Seeing a soldier on the road, she hailed him and asked him whither he was going.

"Nowhere in pertickerler, miss."

"Dost know where General Brereton is to be found?" she asked boldly, though blushing none the less for some reason.

"I just seen him down ter Colonel Dayton's quarters."

"Wilt favour me by taking him these flowers?" Janice requested, holding them out with one hand, while her other tendered a Spanish milled dollar, her eyes dropped groundward, as if to hide something.

"Calkerlate I might; and who 'll I say sent 'em?"

"I — say nothing at all — but just give him the bunch."

"Don't hardly worth seem carryin'," said the soldier, glancing at the flowers with open contempt, "an' sartin it ain't worth no sich money ter take 'em." Lest she would agree with him, however, he set off with celerity. "Like as not he 'll give me a reprimand fer troublin' him with a gal's nonsense," he soliloquised, as he walked. "Swan ef I ain't most tempted ter throw 'em in the ditch."

Fortunately he did not commit the breach of faith, though there were distinct qualities of shame and apology in his voice and manner, when he walked up to a group of officers sitting under a tree, and said to one of them, —

"A gal gave me this, general, ter take ter you, an' she would hev it, though I told her she'd no business ter be botherin' yer with sich plumb foolishness."

The flowers were snatched rather than taken from his hand. "Where was she when she gave them to you?" demanded Brereton.

"I seen her go back inter the garding over ter Headquarters House, sir."

The general, without a word of explanation or apology to his fellow officers, started away almost at a run. Halting suddenly after he had gone some fifty feet, he fumbled in his pocket, and pulling out three or four coins, he tossed back a gold piece to the man; then hastened away.

"Waal!" ejaculated the soldier, as he stooped and picked it up. "A hard dollar from a gal was bad enough, but I did n't expect ter see the general go clean crazy like that. A louis, as I 'm a livin' sinner!"

When Jack entered the hedge, one glance he took, and then strode to the garden seat. "I know you would not torture me with false hopes, yet I — I dare not believe the message I would give the world to read in these," he said hoarsely.

The girl put her hand gently on his arm. "They say, Jack," she replied, her eyes upturned to his, "whatever you would wish they might."

On the words, her lover's arms were about her.

"Then they say that I am forgiven and —"

"Oh, Jack," cried Janice despairingly, "can you ever forgive me — "Can I ever atone — ever thank you for all —"

"Hush, my sweet. Put the past, as I will, out of mind for ever."

"I will, I will — but, oh, Jack, I must tell you how I have suffered — how my heart nearly broke — so that you may know how happy I am!"

"Oh, sweetheart," cried Brereton, clasping her tightly. "Do you mean — can the flowers truly say that you really love me?"

"They can, but never how much."

"Then tell me yourself."

"No words can."

"Ah, sweetheart, try," besought Brereton.

"Then stoop and let me whisper it," said the girl, and obediently Jack bent his head. But what she had to tell was told by her lips upon his.

It was Billy Lee who finally interrupted them. "You'll 'scuse me, Gen'l an' Missy Janice," he called, apologetically, from the opening in the hedge, "but Lady Washington dun send me to 'splain dat if she delay de dinner any mo' dat Gen'l Brereton suttinly be late at de cote-martial." And as a second couple made a hurried if reluctant exodus from paradise, he continued, "I dun tender youse my bestest felicitations, sah. Golly! Won't Missis Sukey and dat Blue-skin dun be pleased."

"She will be when she and Peg are bought and safe back at Greenwood, Billy, as they soon will be," predicted Brereton.

In the dining room stood the commander-in-chief and Mrs. Washington, and as Jack and Janice entered it through one of the windows, the latter caught the girl in her arms, and kissed her warmly.

"Oh, Lady Washington," cried the maiden, ecstatically, "how can I ever thank you!"

"That is my duty, Janice, not yours," asserted Brereton, taking the matron's hand and kissing it.

Janice, her eyes starry with happiness, crossed to General

Washington. "Oh, your Excellency," she begged, her hand on his arm, "there is but one flaw in my gladness, and 't is that for my sake he lost your trust and affection. Will you—oh, won't you forgive him, as he has me, and let my joy be perfect?"

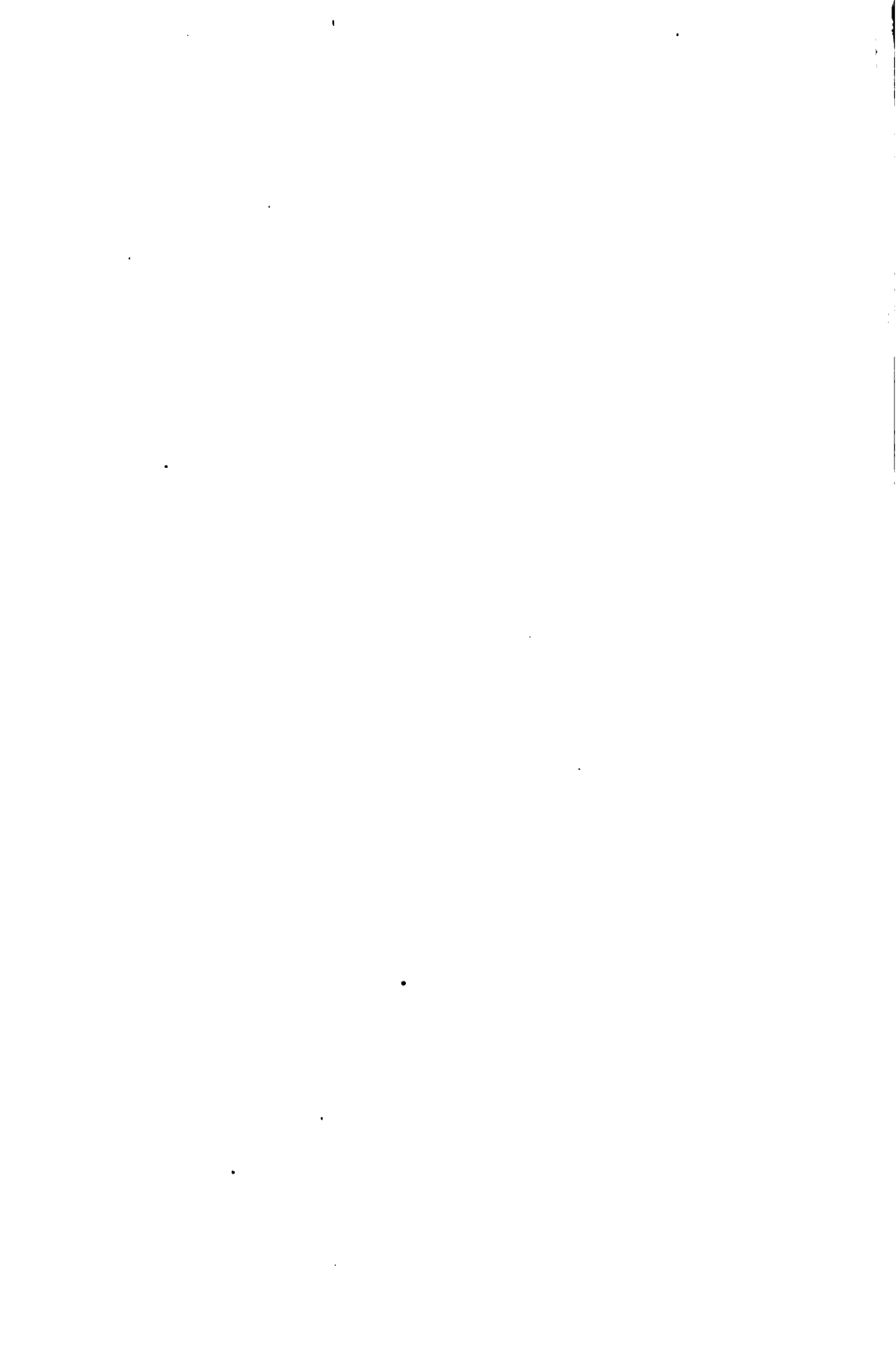
Washington smiled indulgently into the winsome face, and turning to Brereton, held out his hand. "You have secured an able pleader," he said, "and I cannot find it in my heart to give her nay at any such time. Indeed," he added, as Jack eagerly took the proffered peace-offering, "'t is to be feared, my boy, that had she but made her prayer to me instead of you, I should have found it difficult not to be equally faithless to my duty."

Janice stooped and kissed the two hands as they clasped each other, then, as her father entered the room, she sped to him, and throwing her arms about his neck, kissed him as well.

"Mr. Meredith," said Jack, tendering his hand a little doubtfully, "a bondservant of yours ran off while yet there was four years of service due to you. He is ready now to fulfil the bond, nor will he complain if you enforce the legal penalty of double time."

"'T is lucky for me, general," answered the squire, heartily, "that ye acknowledge my claim, for I take it that, my lass having sworn a new allegiance, I shall need a hold on you, if I am to retain any lien on her."

"Nay, Mr. Meredith," said Washington, "you need not fear that the new tie will efface the old one. We have ended the mother country's rule of us, but 't is probable her children will never cease to feel affection for the one who gave them being; and so you will find it with Miss Janice."



This book should be returned to the Library on or before the last date stamped below.

A fine of five cents a day is incurred by retaining it beyond the specified time.

Please return promptly.

FEB 9 60 H

~~JE OCT 11 1948~~

~~ONE OCT 21 48~~

OCT 22 '52 H

FEB 19 '53 H

MAR 5 '53 H

~~MAR 5 54 H~~

~~MAR 4 55 H~~

SEP 15 '59 H

